Commentary
April 2002

Israel's War
Efraim Karsh

The Return of the "Jackal Bins"
Norman Podhoretz

Too Many Immigrants?
Tamar Jacoby

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Visions of Ground Zero
Michael J. Lewis

The Great American Songbook: Part 3
Terry Teachout

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Jewish-Christian Dialogue
Jon D. Levenson & Critics

Books in Review
Dan Seligman • Kevin Shapiro • Jacob Heilbrunn
Kenneth R. Timmerman • Hillel Halkin

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Legal Scholars Say Court Should Let Families Direct Funds as They See Fit

Dozens of distinguished legal scholars support the Cleveland school choice program's constitutionality.

These experts include Jesse H. Choper, Earl Warren Professor of Public Law at the University of California at Berkeley (Boalt Hall), and Douglas W. Kmiec, dean and St. Thomas More Professor of Law at the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law. Here are excerpts from a recent commentary by Deans Choper and Kmiec:

The dispute over school choice [is] perhaps the most watched case on the U.S. Supreme Court's docket this term. But the high degree of scrutiny the case will receive should not keep the Court from following through with its recent precedent and upholding the constitutionality of the [Cleveland] program...

The contending positions revolve around the First Amendment obligation not to establish religion...[A] large number of decisions have addressed the topic...many of which involved public financial assistance to church-related schools...[A] majority of the Court has regularly upheld a series of programs that spend public funds for the benefit of all pupils — those attending public schools, private schools, and parochial schools...

...Justice Sandra Day O'Connor [and] Justice Stephen Breyer... stated in *Mitchell v. Helms* (2000), "when government aid supports a school's religious mission only because of independent decisions made by numerous individuals to guide their secular aid to that school, '[n]o reasonable observer is likely to draw from the facts . . . an inference that the State itself is endorsing a religious practice or belief.' "

...[The Cleveland program] emerged as a result of the financial and educational meltdown of the Cleveland public school system...The legislature enacted a scholarship program, primarily benefiting families with incomes below 200 percent of the poverty line, for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

The scholarship...may be directed by the parents to any private school, religious or not, within the boundaries of the Cleveland school district. The scholarship could have also been used in any suburban public school in an adjacent district, but none chose to participate...[Forty-six] of the 56 private schools participating were religious...But this is a product of [parents'] genuinely independent and private choice, and a result likely accentuated by the refusal of public schools in districts adjacent to Cleveland to participate in the program.

Those defending the Cleveland plan...believe that neither the parents' free choice nor the equally free (if educationally unfortunate) nonparticipation of suburban public schools can be said to convey a message of religious endorsement...That a participating school is forbidden from preferring students of its own faith only makes clearer that the [Cleveland] program does not endorse religion.

Parental School Choice is Widespread — Unless You're Poor.

Reasonably informed observers — especially those "aware of the history and context of the community," as Justice O'Connor wrote in concurring in *Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board v. Pinette* (1995) — should conclude that the program is designed to improve and expand educational opportunities to the children whose local public school has failed them. The Supreme Court, in keeping with its recent precedent, should conclude the same.

The full text of this essay, which appeared in the February 11 issue of Legal Times, *is at www.schoolchoiceinfo.org.*

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Black Alliance for Educational Options

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Commentary®

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Commentary
April 2002

Letters from Readers

Radical Islam

To the Editor:

Daniel Pipes states that some 100 to 150 million people worldwide embrace radical Islam, and that some 500 million other Muslims "concur with its rank anti-Americanism," sympathizing more with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban than with the United States ["Who Is the Enemy?" January].

But having answered the question posed by his article's title, Mr. Pipes fails to ask its obvious corollary: what have we done to invite this enmity? He thus misses the most important thing we can do for moderate Muslims in their attempt to combat anti-Americanism: taking responsibility for the wrongs we have committed (and continue to commit) against Muslim and other third-world countries. For too long, we have seen them as pawns to be used in any way we see fit, without regard for their own well-being. After all, it was the U.S., in its struggle against the Soviet Union, that armed the fighters who would become the Taliban.

Max Rivers
Shutesbury, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

Daniel Pipes argues that the conflict in which America is now engaged is not—to use Samuel P. Huntington's term—a "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West. Mr. Pipes takes a more optimistic view, seeing the conflict primarily as an internecine affair between radical and moderate Muslims. As he points out, Islamists are no less vicious in eradicating dissent among their coreligionists than in their enmity toward the West. Islamism, he suggests, is just another ideology, like Soviet Communism. Given adequate time, commitment, and resources, it too can be contained until its eventual demise.

But Huntington's thesis is hardly disproved by the existence of internal dissent in the Islamic world. If anything, the zeal with which Islamic fundamentalists seek to stifle the expression of pluralism and individual liberty by other Muslims shows the chasm between their civilization and our own.

Moreover, Islamism—unlike Communism in the countries where it was imposed—is a home-grown, grassroots phenomenon. Perhaps moderate Muslims are "weak, divided, intimidated, and generally ineffectual," as Mr. Pipes writes, precisely because radical Islam more closely reflects the national aspirations and religious passions of the most energetic segment of Muslim society.

Radical Islam may be a consequence of greater contact between the Muslim world and the West over the past half-century. But the values and ideas that sustain it are centuries old, and run deeper than mere ideology. The containment of a civilization could make fighting the cold war look simple by comparison.

Greg Lumelsky
New York City

To the Editor:

Daniel Pipes's claim that Islam itself is not the enemy is unsubstantiated and dubious. It disregards the fact that there is no serious opposition to attacks upon America from within the Muslim community. To him, the real clash is between Islamists and "moderate Muslims." Apparently, we simply got in the way.

Mr. Pipes disputes the notion that our enemy is Islam by pointing out that there is "Islamist enmity toward Muslims." But this makes no sense. Did the Nazis' persecution of some of their fellow Germans or the Soviets' oppression of some of their fellow Russians make those regimes any less our enemies?

Allen Weingarten
Morristown, New Jersey

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TO THE EDITOR:

Daniel Pipes writes: "If roughly half the population across the Islamic world hates America, the other half does not."

But even moderate Muslims are not moderate on the question of Zionism; their hatred for Israel is close to universal. They do not dissent from expressions of genocidal sentiment like those, cited by Mr. Pipes, of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the extremist sheikh who declared on al-Jazeera television, "On the hour of judgment, Muslims will fight the Jews and kill them."

Anti-Semitism and its child, anti-Zionism, are powerful in a way that defies comprehension. Ethnic and religious hostilities are often destructive, yet anti-Semitism stands out as especially dangerous. If moderate Islam is to become a political force, it must separate itself from the radical anti-Zionism in the face of which it has been silent and impotent.

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
Staten Island, New York

DANIEL PIPES writes:

"What have we done to invite" the enmity of militant Islam? asks Max Rivers. That is the wrong question, I reply. Islamists hate America for what it is, not for the policies it pursues. In this, as in much else, Islamists replicate the pattern established by their fascist and Communist precursors. Would Mr. Rivers ask what the United States did to incur Pearl Harbor or the wrath of Hitler and Stalin? I doubt it. To all totalitarians, including the Islamist variant, America represents an ineluctable challenge that they must fight.

Greg Lumelsky and Allen Weingarten both chide me for what Mr. Lumelsky calls an "unsubstantiated and dubious" distinction between Islam the religion and militant Islam the ideology. Again, I return to the analogy of earlier totalitarians. In World War II, the aim of the U.S. war effort was to change the way Germany, Italy, and Japan were ruled, ousting the fascist leaders and bringing in leaders with whom America could coexist. In the cold war, the goal was once again to oust the Soviet leadership and pave the way for Russians with whom we could coexist. The same applies today with militant Islam: the ultimate goal is to weaken or even destroy this movement and bring in decent leaders, as has already been done in Afghanistan. The Nazis and Communists were the enemy, not the German or the Russian peoples; likewise, the enemy today is militant Islam, not the whole Muslim world.

It is a curious fact, by the way, that Messrs. Lumelsky and Weingarten concur with the Islamists on the key point that militant Islam equals Islam, dismissing other approaches to the religion as inauthentic, insignificant, or otherwise irrelevant. I disagree, on the simple grounds that most Muslims reject militant Islam.

George Jochnowitz makes the valid observation that nearly all Muslims subscribe to anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, and that true moderation requires that these be tamed, if not eliminated. I agree and note that, as so often in the past, attitudes toward Jews serve as a vital touchstone of moderation and decency. In this respect, moderate Muslims have nearly as far to travel as do their Islamist coreligionists.

New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

In his article on the topsy-turvy world of New York City politics ["Succeeding Giuliani," January], Fred Siegel overlooks the role played by two topsy-turvy policies: campaign finance and its stepchild, mandatory term limits.

Political campaigns in New York City are expensive; it takes a lot of money to get a message out to voters. But campaign-finance reform has limited the ability of challengers to raise large sums, thereby concentrating power in the hands of party hacks like Mark Green, Fernando Ferrer, and Al Sharpton, and conferring significant advantages on incumbents. The result is that only a challenger with an independent fortune like Michael Bloomberg has the resources to compete.

Of course, one way to neutralize the advantages incumbents enjoy is to force them out of office with mandatory term limits. But rather than give New Yorkers more choice, this policy gives them less. In the last election, they were deprived of Rudolph Giuliani, the candidate with the most experience and skill at a time when these qualities mattered most.

New York was fortunate to get a Giuliani from this system. But make no mistake: this was by luck, not by design. If the city wants to right itself, as Mr. Siegel hopes, it should adopt plans that make it easier, not harder, for good candidates to run.

ERIC HALPERN
West Hartford, Connecticut

FRED SIEGEL writes:

Has campaign-finance reform concentrated power in the hands of party hacks? Of the three politicians cited by Eric Halpern, only one, Freddy Ferrer, can in any sense be considered a hack.

Al Sharpton is a race man, whose career has been built on threats to defeat the nominees of the Democratic party; indeed, the 2001 election represented the second time he tried, successfully, to undermine Mark Green in a campaign for office. As for Green himself, he has many failings, but he has never been embraced by the party leadership.

Where Mr. Halpern is closer to the mark is in suggesting that Green probably helped defeat himself by sticking to campaign-spending limits in the face of Michael Bloomberg's onslaught of television ads. When you add Bloomberg's charitable contributions to nonprofit organizations with electoral influence, the new mayor probably spent around $100 million to win. Such, as Mr. Halpern rightly notes, are the effects of campaign finance "reform."

Term limits are a different matter. Given the disastrous history of third terms in both New York City and New York State, my feelings about them are not so straightforward as Mr. Halpern's. Mayors Fiorello La Guardia and Ed Koch, Governors Nelson Rockefeller and Mario Cuomo—all enjoyed the benefit of a third term,

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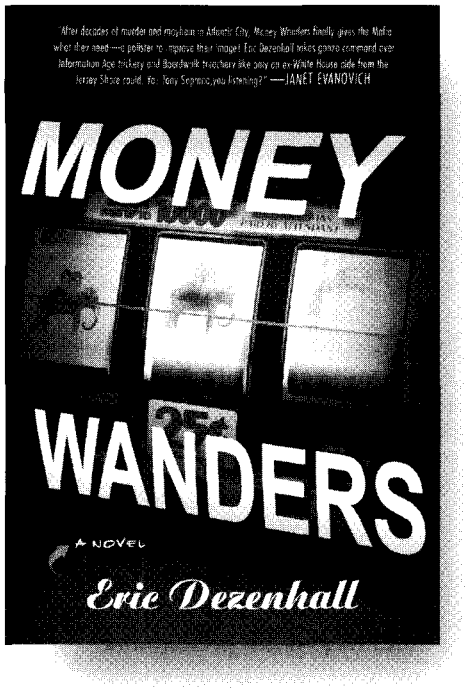

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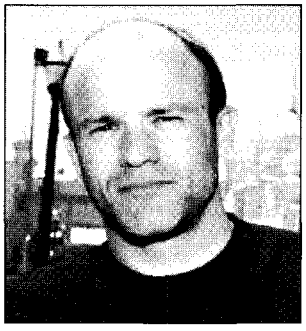

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and none was successful in it. Should Governor George Pataki be returned to office a third time (the state, unlike the city, has not imposed term limits), we can expect no better.

What to do about any of this is still another question. I would caution against drawing too many conclusions from a campaign that took place in the wake of an unparalleled physical attack on the city and in which the outgoing mayor became a national hero whose endorsement was given unprecedented value. To paraphrase Oliver Wendell Holmes on the law, unusual elections make for bad political generalizations.

Human Rights

TO THE EDITOR:

Bravo to Adrian Karatnycky and Arch Puddington for their article about Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch ["The Human-Rights Lobby Meets Terrorism," January]. I had not known that both groups support the Palestinians' "right of return"—a "right" that even a dove like Amos Oz agrees would mean "the elimination of Israel"—but I cannot say that I was surprised to learn of the depth of their animosity toward the Jewish state.

Some months ago, I attended a Human Rights Watch film festival in New York and was shocked by the audience's response to *Souha: Surviving Hell*, a documentary about Souha Becharre. In 1989, this young Lebanese woman—a Christian and a Communist—slipped into the home of General Antoine Lahad, leader of the South Lebanon Army, Israel's ally at the time, and shot him twice in the chest. Somehow, he survived. After serving ten years in prison, Souha was released. The film takes us with her as she journeys triumphantly through Lebanon, cheered by admirers at Communist and Hizbullah rallies held in her honor.

The audience at the film festival cheered happily along with Souha's admirers on screen. I had never quite grasped the ugly, partisan nature of much "human-rights" activism.

GARY SPRUCH
New York City

Bosnia

TO THE EDITOR:

According to Jacob Heilbrunn [Books in Review, January], David Halberstam in *War in a Time of Peace* criticizes the first Bush administration for its "too cautious" policy toward Yugoslavia, and particularly its reluctance to back what Mr. Heilbrunn calls "the breakaway province of Bosnia."

The implicit assumption—whether it is Halberstam's or Mr. Heilbrunn's, I do not know—that secession was the core issue in Bosnia is simplistic. Secession *was* the exclusive issue in largely homogeneous Slovenia and Croatia, both of which, without foreign military assistance, soon overcame Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic and achieved independence from Belgrade. In Bosnia, however, the crux of the problem was not that the province wanted to "break away" from Yugoslavia but rather that its population was almost evenly divided among mutually antagonistic Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, most of whom—at least the Serbs and Croats—wanted to secede from *Bosnia*.

Instead of recognizing this reality, the U.S. proceeded on the delusional premise that a multiethnic Bosnian state could be viable. This leap of faith resulted in ethnic cleansing and ultimately in de-facto partition, requiring the indefinite presence of outside forces, including our own, to maintain a tenuous peace. It would have been far better had the West recognized reality at the outset and pressed for a partition that would have allowed the Bosnian Serbs to join Serbia and the Croats to join Croatia, if that was their choice, with a Western protectorate, if necessary, for a Muslim-dominated state around Sarajevo.

One wonders if the current American infatuation with "diversity" and multiethnic harmony might have had something to do with this misbegotten policy, which has never been openly disavowed and whose unhappy consequences remain with us to this day.

ANDY ANDERSON
Bronxville, New York

JACOB HEILBRUNN writes:

Andy Anderson offers a highly misleading account of the Serbian assault on Bosnia. Secession was, in fact, the issue. Bosnians were confronted with a tough choice after Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence from the Yugoslav federation in June 1991. Continued membership in the federation would have left the province's Muslims and Croats at the mercy of Slobodan Milosevic; independence, they knew, would lead to war. In March 1992 the Bosnians held a referendum on independence, and 99.4 percent of the voters elected to secede. Ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Serb irregulars quickly followed.

Mr. Anderson's contention that Bosnia could have been neatly partitioned is preposterous. The population was not "evenly divided," as he puts it. Bosnia was 43 percent Muslim, 35 percent Orthodox Serb, and 18 percent Roman Catholic Croat, and the ethnic groups had intermarried to a large extent. It is hard to see how partition could have been carried out peacefully. Today's de-facto partition of Bosnia is not the result of the West's moralistic reluctance to divide up the province, as Mr. Anderson would have it, but of the West's failure to intervene at a point when Milosevic and his Bosnian Serb henchmen might still have been stopped in their tracks.

Learning the right lessons from Bosnia—where the most recent election was conducted relatively cleanly, with the active participation of Muslims, Croats, and Serbs alike—is not a trivial matter. In Afghanistan, the West is once again trying to balance different ethnic factions to create a stable democracy. What Mr. Anderson calls our "infatuation" with multiethnic harmony is likely to serve us well again.

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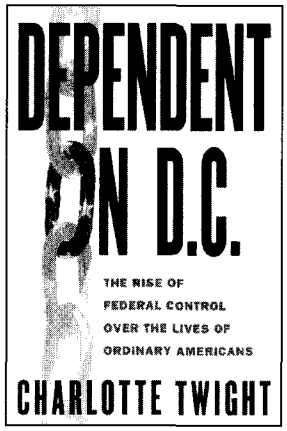

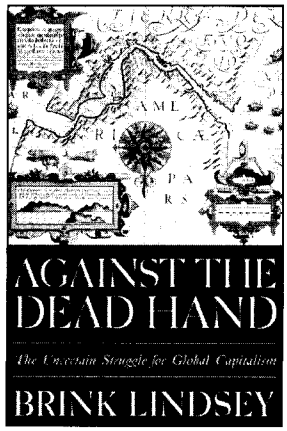

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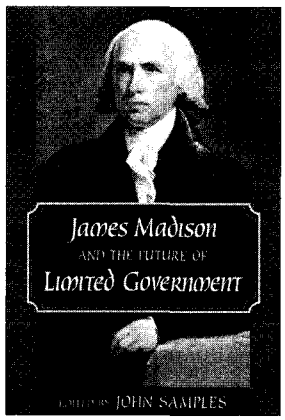

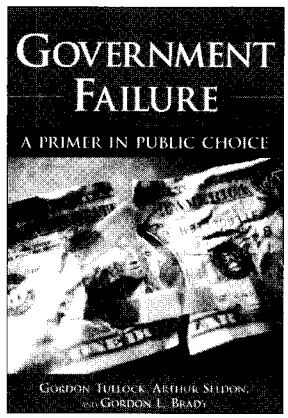

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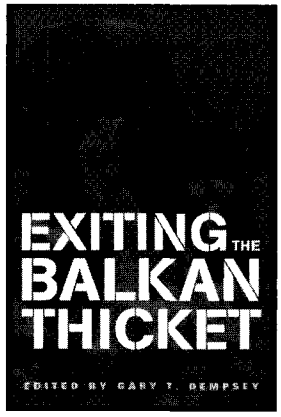

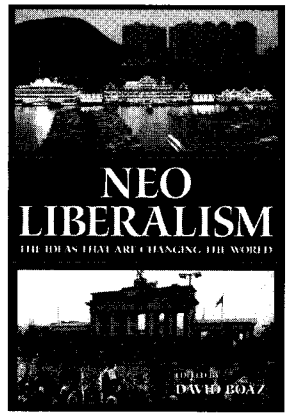

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Jewish-Christian Dialogue

Jon D. Levenson & Critics

While pleased with Jon D. Levenson's designation of us as "four highly-regarded professors of Jewish studies" ["How Not to Conduct Jewish-Christian Dialogue," December 2001], we are dismayed by his wholesale dismissal of our efforts in writing and publishing *Dabru Emet*, a dismissal epitomized by his closing charge that our efforts pose "hazards to Jewish practice and identity" and that to deny this (as we have explicitly done) is "whistling in the dark."

Truth be told, Mr. Levenson was invited to sign our statement, and we respect his decision not to do so based on his theological disagreement with us. But we do not respect, indeed we protest, his contemptuous dismissal of our project through sarcasm and unjust condemnation of our very motives, which seem to us examples of his bad faith as a fellow Jewish thinker.

Presented as a newspaper ad, *Dabru Emet* is a political statement, offered to arouse attention and to provide the minimal common ground needed for any serious discussion. We find it bizarre that a serious scholar like Mr. Levenson would base his criticisms on such a statement alone, totally ignoring the book we published, *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Westview), for just the kind of scholarly review he purports to offer. Most of Mr. Levenson's specific criticisms are answered in that book. Although we are prepared to add new answers to his old questions in subsequent publications and forums, we can only do so in an atmosphere of good faith, one that we expect in Jewish-Christian dialogue and all the more so in intra-Jewish dialogue. Aside from the considerations of space, we cannot do so here and now with Mr. Levenson in his present state of mind. We expect better from our fellow Jewish interlocutors, especially from those whose disagreement is truly interrogatory and not an exercise in invective.

We are, finally, perplexed that Mr. Levenson thinks Jews and Christians have "an instinctive repugnance toward each other," when virtually his entire professional career has been spent teaching Jewish studies in Christian divinity schools.

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University of Notre Dame
South Bend, Indiana

PETER OCHS:

Dabru Emet is a statement about Christianity, speaking on behalf of a renewed Judaism that is recovering its confidence and sense of purpose after the devastations of the Holocaust. Like the previous revitalizations of Judaism after periods of terrible loss, this one entails significant changes in Jewish reasoning. For two centuries before the Holocaust, Judaism was largely defined by an irremediable battle between modern, secular Judaism and anti-modern Orthodoxy. *Dabru Emet* belongs to a Judaism that is no longer defined by this logic. It therefore elicits the most confused

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responses from Jews who still think in terms of either/or. Such Jews find nothing new in *Dabru Emet* because they misread it in terms of their own, old dichotomies. Jon D. Levenson's review is a symptom of this kind of reading.

The four authors of *Dabru Emet*, including myself, believe that our revitalized Judaism should make its wisdom known in the public square. We believe that Jews must respond to what our neighbors are teaching and enacting. But we cannot respond to what we do not understand. In the past, Jewish parents encouraged their children to study their neighbors' secular beliefs, but they tended to discourage any comparable study of their neighbors' Christianity. This veil of ignorance may once have served the purposes of Jewish self-definition. It is no longer wise or tenable.

In the first place, unless they understand various Christian theologies, our children will be unable to judge which forms of Christianity now enhance Jewish values and self-interests and which continue to threaten them. Furthermore, our children take greater pride in their Judaism, and are more eager to learn about it, when they engage in dialogue with representatives of other religions, Christianity most of all. Finally, we have learned from the horrors of the past century that secular humanism is an insufficient bulwark against Western tendencies toward nihilism and totalitarianism. Among fellow religionists, we need to locate friends within the Christian world who will help us protect the next generations from such influences. *Dabru Emet* is an invitation to these Christians to join us.

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

NICHOLAS DE LANGE:

Jon D. Levenson's article is an excellent example of the poison to which *Dabru Emet* is intended as a very modest antidote. Many Jews remain unaware of the radical changes that have taken place in Christian attitudes to Judaism in virtually all the Western churches since World War II. Mr. Levenson is aware of these changes, yet he insists on giving prominence to hostile sound-bites from Christian leaders in the remote past as if they were characteristic of Christian attitudes today. Such slogans have been wheeled out endlessly by those who want to show that Christianity has a long history of anti-Judaism. (It is possible, of course, to find equally negative statements in classical Jewish writings about Gentiles in general and Christians in particular.)

I signed *Dabru Emet* because I wanted to reassure ordinary Jews that the old horror stories can be relegated to the history books, and that Christianity does not pose a threat to Judaism. That is the essential message of *Dabru Emet*. It is not an attempt to demonstrate, as Mr. Levenson puts it, that Judaism and Christianity are "as alike as two peas in a single religious pod." I do not see this claim anywhere in the document, which in fact insists on the irreconcilable differences between the two religions.

Dabru Emet stresses common ground in a factual and uncontroversial manner. But its main thrust is to challenge arguments that might be put forward against Jews' adopting a more tolerant and even positive attitude to Christianity. Its claim is that neither Christian theology nor contemporary issues like the Holocaust and Israel constitute an obstacle to Jews' trusting Christians and working together with them to increase justice and peace in the world.

In advancing this claim the statement contributes to overcoming age-old conflicts that have done irreparable damage to the world we inhabit. I am not sorry to have signed *Dabru Emet*, and I stand by every word in it.

Cambridge University
Cambridge, England

EUGENE FISHER:

Jon D. Levenson is normally a very good and reliable scholar. His work has illuminated a number of significant topics, not least among them important aspects of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. He is quite right to remind us that the differences between our two deeply interrelated faith-traditions are as important to keep in mind as what we hold in common. Still, he is a bit unfair to the authors of *Dabru Emet* in his assumption that by looking at the latter they are automatically denying the former.

Mr. Levenson attacks *Dabru Emet* for its assertion that the "humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world." This means, he says, that the statement affirms "as a matter of belief that the Church will survive until the final redemption." But this does not follow. The irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians is a matter of fact. It would exist even if every Christian on earth were to disappear and if the Church were no more.

Mr. Levenson next dismisses *Dabru Emet*'s affirmation that "Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah." His examples here are very weak, however. Saying that one should avoid not only adultery itself but also wanting to commit adultery is not a sermon that would surprise a Jewish congregation any more than a Christian one. Likewise, as Mr. Levenson points out, there are Jewish precedents for turning the other cheek—that is, requiting evil with good.

Finally, there are two areas in which Mr. Levenson has lost perspective. The first is his rather astonishing attempt to impose a supersessionist theology upon Christianity. Here, at least from the vantage point of official Roman Catholic (and much of Western Protestant) tradition, he is simply wrong. Catholicism does not teach, as he claims, that "the Church . . .

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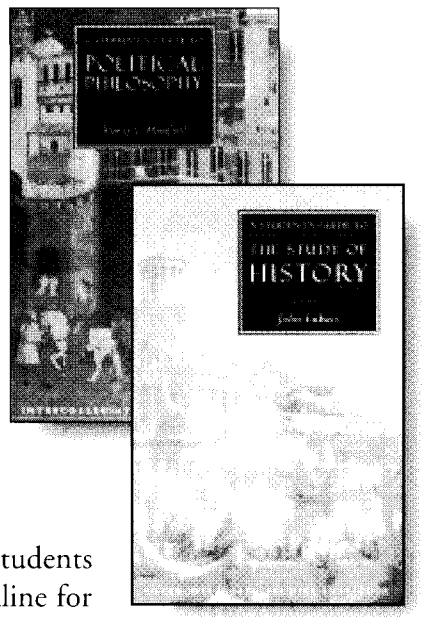

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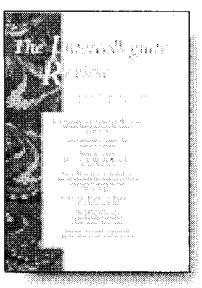

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has replaced the Jewish people, Abraham's natural descendants." It once did, but this is exactly the misunderstanding that the Second Vatican Council rejected. Yes, Mr. Levenson can find a lot of support in the writings of the Church fathers for his viewpoint. But none of these Church fathers was cited by the Council in its key statements, *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate*. Mr. Levenson here falsely presents the teaching of my Church.

Second, Mr. Levenson appears to argue that Nazism was not in any serious way inimical to Christianity and that if Germany had won the war the Nazis would not have turned their eyes more systematically toward the elimination of the churches as a potential threat to their "thousand-year Reich." In fact, Nazi ideology represented, from top to bottom, a rejection of all that the Christian churches stood for. The churches were the Nazis' obvious next target.

If Mr. Levenson were to undertake even the briefest of studies of what the Nazis did to the Catholic clergy of Poland, I believe he would see what the Nazis had in mind. Frankly, his bland denial of reality in this instance strikes me as bordering on historical revisionism.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Washington, D.C.

RABBI CHARLES L. ARIAN:

Jon D. Levenson's strongest criticism of *Dabru Emet* is leveled at its assertion that "a new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice." He correctly notes that the era of growing Christian-Jewish understanding has coincided with unprecedented high rates of intermarriage and assimilation. He claims that the breakdown of the "instinctive repugnance" Jews and Christians have felt for each other is what has made intermarriage possible.

But Jews are intermarrying not because they no longer feel a repugnance for Christianity but rather because they have ceased to believe in and practice Judaism. Many Jews make no religious affirmation beyond the view that "Jesus was not the messiah." Their automatic antipathy toward Christian belief causes them to assume that whatever Christianity affirms, Judaism denies. A religious identity based on nothing more than the negation of "the other" has no staying power.

In a dozen years as both a Hillel director and the rabbi of a Conservative synagogue, my experience has been that—contrary to Mr. Levenson's fears—a positive appraisal of Christianity can *strengthen* Jewish practice and identity. Jews learn that belief in a personal God who loves and redeems us is not just a "Christian" concept.

Institute for Christian
& Jewish Studies
Baltimore, Maryland

LEORA BATNITZKY:

I very much agree with Jon D. Levenson's argument about "how not to conduct" Jewish-Christian dialogue. He is surely correct to point out the historical and theological pitfalls of a dialogue of mutuality between Judaism and Christianity. And he is right to highlight and criticize shallow attempts at a kind of tolerance based on the lowest common denominator.

But I do not think *Dabru Emet*—which I signed—attempts to promote this type of shallow tolerance. As I think Mr. Levenson might agree, the proper aim of interreligious conversation should not be mutual affirmation but the opportunity for each party to clarify its own position and even judgment of the other. *Dabru Emet*, taken together with *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (its companion volume of scholarly essays), attempts to provide precisely this kind of educational opportunity.

Mr. Levenson is most concerned with what *Dabru Emet* teaches Jews about Judaism. He is afraid that, in the already permissive culture of what he sees as mutual respect between Jews and Christians, Jews will find no reason for remaining Jewish. Yet it may be that the soaring rates of intermarriage have more to do with Jewish ignorance about Judaism than with the attitudes of Christians.

An enormous misconception of liberal Jews is that Judaism lacks a theological dimension and is concerned only with ethics or humanism. They would be surprised to learn that the Jewish tradition is saturated with profound theological commitments. Learning about the ways in which Judaism shares a number of theological assumptions with Christianity may teach liberal Jews about their own religion. And the more they learn about the Jewish and Christian traditions, the more they may appreciate not the mutuality between the two, but their profound if not irreconcilable differences.

Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

RABBI RUTH LANGER:

There is no question that *Dabru Emet* is flawed. Its brevity precludes theological sophistication, and differences of opinion among committee members resulted in shallow compromises. But as a signer of the document, I believe, contrary to Jon D. Levenson, that it is a useful starting point for deeper discussion.

The revision of Christian theology concerning Jews, at least among Catholic and mainline Protestant churches, is real, and deserves a serious Jewish response. Mr. Levenson faults *Dabru Emet* for never mentioning the rabbinic concept of the Noahide laws and their guarantee of salvation for ethical non-Jews who do not practice idolatry. But the Noahide laws cast all Gentiles into a common category, and our Christian partners rightly see this as a violation of a cardinal principle of dialogue: to strive to see the other in a way that corresponds to the other's self-understanding. Christians challenge us to develop a theological understanding of them *as*

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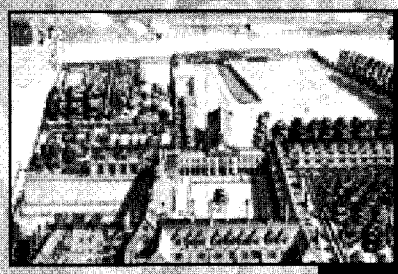

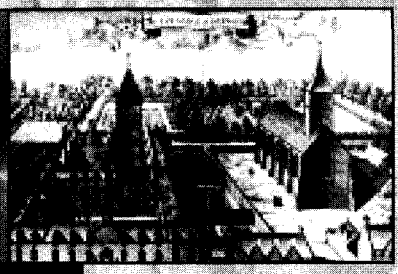

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Christians, not as generic Gentiles. *Dabru Emet* responds to this—albeit inadequately.

Just as revisions of Christian theology followed scholarly exposures of the realities and consequences of Christian anti-Judaism, so too an adequate Jewish statement will require deeper study of how Jews have understood their Christian neighbors. Books like David Novak's *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* build upon isolated medieval statements that take a positive view of Christianity, ignoring our vastly larger heritage of negative portrayals. As Mr. Levenson points out, *Dabru Emet* continues to dodge this issue. But only by directly confronting it can we match the soul-searching of our Christian partners and construct a more adequate corrective.

Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

SISTER MARGARET SHEPHERD:

In reading Jon D. Levenson's criticisms of *Dabru Emet* I could not help recalling the Jewish response to *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican II document generally seen as the cornerstone of modern Christian-Jewish relations. After it was issued in 1965, there was great disappointment and considerable anger at its omissions. Jews found no mention of either the Holocaust or Israel; they also found references to anti-Semitism that did not acknowledge any Christian responsibility for Jewish suffering. Several paragraphs represented major steps for Roman Catholics, but these were not always appreciated by Jewish readers.

The key point, however, is that the document was not an academic theological exposition, but rather part of a conversation within the Church which included traditionalists who thought that no change was necessary. Arab bishops, for example, opposed *Nostra Aetate* because of their rejection of the state of Israel, and others felt that relations with faiths other than Judaism merited equal concern. *Nostra Aetate* had to be conservative if it was to obtain approval. Yet today, both Christians and Jews recognize *Nostra Aetate* as the beginning of a process of dialogue, and read it in the light of the important developments of the past half-century to which Mr. Levenson refers.

It seems to me that *Dabru Emet* should be read in the same way. Any document seeking to initiate dialogue has to commend itself to a wide and often skeptical constituency—in the case of the Jewish community, a constituency whose memories remain steeped in tragedy. If it is to gain a public hearing and contribute to a purposeful and warm relationship that will overcome past hostility, it has to address understandable fears and focus, at least initially, on areas of agreement.

Council of Christians and Jews
London, England

RABBI SAMUEL M. SILVER:

In his critique of *Dabru Emet*, Jon D. Levenson lists the differences, mostly theological, between Judaism and Christianity. But the document is not an academic work. It is a treaty, not a treatise.

Shading the truth for the sake of comity has biblical precedent. God reported to Abraham that Sarah had said she doubted she could bear a child since she was so old. In fact, Sarah expressed doubts because *Abraham* was so aged. But for the sake of domestic peace God told a white lie. Perhaps the same principle could apply in the case of *Dabru Emet*.

Delray Beach, Florida

NOAH MILLMAN:

Though Jon D. Levenson clearly grasps the dangers inherent in the approach taken by the authors of *Dabru Emet*, it is not clear that he sees the importance of their effort.

As Mr. Levenson notes, the traditional Jewish understanding of other religions revolves around the seven Noahide laws. To the extent that other religions encourage people to observe these laws, and to the extent that these religions do not seek to undermine the Jewish people's covenant with God, Judaism views them positively. But this framework is insufficient as a basis for cooperation with Christianity. Because we read the same book (albeit very differently), and because we make similar claims to a unique covenant with God, we cannot have the distant relations that Judaism might have with, say, Buddhism.

Indeed, it is not absurd for Jews to affirm that Christianity, unlike other faiths, may have an important role to play in bringing about the messianic age. Maimonides regards Christianity's success as a means by which knowledge of the true God is disseminated. Here we find a doctrine that sees Christianity as a unique force for good, and potentially an important part of God's plan, precisely because of its close relationship with Judaism.

Even for those who, with good reason, want to avoid eschatological speculation, dialogue with Christians retains a dimension of religious obligation. To the extent that the Christian churches have undertaken to purify themselves of anti-Judaism, they have repented. If sincere, this gesture commands a response of forgiveness from the injured. Christians are not wrong, then, to expect more than expressions of satisfaction from the Jewish establishment, and Jews are not wrong to seek to establish relations with Christians on a firmer and more intimate basis than with any other faith.

Brooklyn, New York

MARK BERNSTEIN:

For too long, emphasis on doctrines that differentiate faiths, as well as denominations within a faith, have resulted in hatred, bigotry, and bloodshed—most recently illustrated by the fanaticism of the September 11 attacks. Has the time not come for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to find a commonality in the sublime monotheistic vision they

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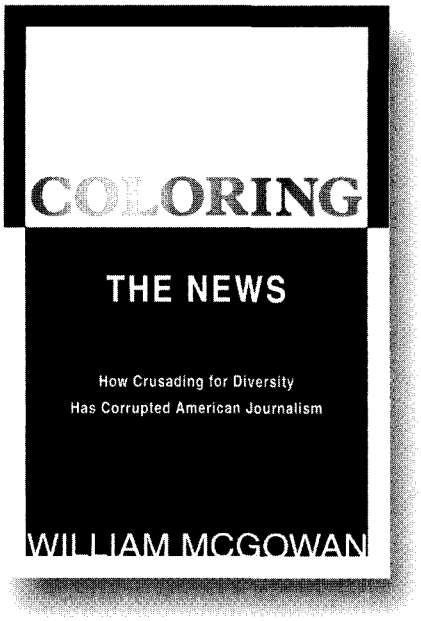

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share? That vision is theologically compatible with all three faiths and is broad enough to draw them together. Through ecumenical efforts like *Dabru Emet*, we may more rapidly advance to the time when, as the statement says, "the humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians" will be settled.

Charlotte, North Carolina

MICHAEL WYSCHOGROD:

Jon D. Levenson's cogent critique of *Dabru Emet* is a service to Jews and Christians who could easily be misled into concluding that there are no really difficult theological differences between their faiths. Two of the most intractable of these are the divinity of Jesus and Christianity's abrogation of Mosaic law—neither of which is mentioned in *Dabru Emet*. Its authors would argue, no doubt, that they wished to focus on what unites us rather than on what divides us. But if the document's aim is to show how Jews evaluate Christianity, omission of the difficulties Mr. Levenson enumerates is fatal.

As an Orthodox Jew who has devoted much energy to Jewish-Christian dialogue, I am saddened that *Dabru Emet* missed the opportunity to produce a document that did not evade the hard questions while contributing to improving Jewish-Christian relations.

University of Houston
Houston, Texas

DAVID BERGER:

While the motives underlying *Dabru Emet* are understandable and even laudable, Jon D. Levenson's critique properly underscores serious concerns outweighing the benefits that the document strives to achieve. Shortly after the statement was publicized, the Orthodox Union asked me to formulate the following very brief response, which was later adopted as the position of the Rabbinical Council of America:

> *Dabru Emet* is in many ways an admirable statement composed by people for whom I have high regard. I agree with much of it, including the controversial but carefully balanced passage denying that Nazism was a Christian phenomenon. However, I did not agree to sign it for several reasons. First, for all its exquisitely skillful formulation, it implies that Jews should reassess their view of Christianity in light of Christian reassessments of Judaism. This inclination toward theological reciprocity is fraught with danger. Second, although it is proper to emphasize that Christians "worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, creator of heaven and earth," it is essential to add that worship of Jesus of Nazareth as a manifestation or component of that God constitutes what Jewish law and theology call *avodah zarah*, or foreign worship—at least if done by a Jew. Many Jews died to underscore this point, and the bland assertion that "Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews" is thoroughly inadequate. Finally, the statement discourages either community from "insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other." While intended for the laudable purpose of discouraging missionizing, this assertion conveys an uncomfortably relativistic message.
>
> *Brooklyn College*
> *Brooklyn, New York*

STEVEN FINE:

Many of my reasons for not supporting *Dabru Emet* are articulated by Jon D. Levenson in his spirited and brave article. To the points he makes let me add just one: *Dabru Emet* gives precedence to Christianity over other religions outside Judaism. Its authors write: "While Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel." Christian proselytizing among Hindus, Sikhs, and other non-Christians is thus given tacit support, and the statement seemingly gives its seal of approval not only to contemporary attempts to spread the Christian faith but also to the ways Christianity has extended its reach in the past. The only groups that appear to be out of bounds to Christian missionaries, the statement implies, are Jews.

Although Jews have lived among Christians for centuries, Jewish-Christian dialogue is no more important than Jewish-Muslim, Jewish-Buddhist, or Jewish-Hindu dialogue. Jews should engage in dialogue with all religious communities, affording theological precedence to none.

University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

JACOB NEUSNER:

Jon D. Levenson's splendid critique of *Dabru Emet* rightly focuses on intellectual issues. But he treats as a minor detail what strikes me as critical: nearly all the signers are Reform and Conservative rabbis, whose congregations are loaded with intermarried couples. It seems to me that the statement's urgency derives from the practical politics of finding something to say on the subjects of Hanukkah/Christmas and Easter/Passover, not to mention the problem of little Moshe O'Reilly.

With more than half the Reform congregations in the country unwilling to hire clergy who do not perform intermarriages, and with Conservative rabbis facing heavy pressure not to preach against intermarriage at all, *Dabru Emet* is more than politically expedient. The statement's utter misrepresentation of Judaism's view of Christianity, which Mr. Levenson puts on display, is a necessary theological cover for the shame of Reform and Conservative Judaism and their rabbis' craven politics. What motivated the handful of Orthodox signers I cannot imagine.

Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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STEVEN BRIZEL:

Jon Levenson is to be congratulated for his excellent debunking of *Dabru Emet*. In the mid-1960's, after Vatican II, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the great Orthodox sage, wrote that interfaith dialogue was prohibited between Christians and Jews precisely because of the potential blurring of the theological differences between the two faiths. I was thus particularly disturbed to find several Orthodox rabbis among the statement's signatories.

Flushing, New York

ELLIOT DORFF:

I signed *Dabru Emet* with many of Jon D. Levenson's reservations but with the thought that Jews needed, at least, to begin formulating a Jewish theological response to the Catholic initiatives of the past three decades. After reading Mr. Levenson's article, I think that maybe I—and others—should have refused to sign until substantial changes were made.

University of Judaism
Bel-Air, California

REV. WALTER L. MICHEL:

As a Christian scholar of the Bible and a Lutheran pastor, I totally agree with Jon D. Levenson's assessment of *Dabru Emet*. Its signers are not "speaking truth." Worse, they propagate half-truths. Their politics of appeasement are a danger to Judaism and a misconstrual of Christianity. The Holocaust would not have been possible without the pernicious Christian teaching of supersession—that is, the victory of Christianity over Judaism and the doctrine that only through Jesus is a relationship with God possible. Nor have Christians repudiated this teaching since 1945.

I have written my own response to *Dabru Emet*. Interested readers are welcome to view it on my website: www.michelwl.net.

Chicago, Illinois

Jon D. Levenson

I had hoped for a response from the four authors of *Dabru Emet* that would address at least some of my substantive objections to their statement. I would have been most interested, for example, to see them deal with the challenges posed by the Christian doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation (each completely unmentioned in the statement) to their unqualified assertion that "Jews and Christians worship the same God." Maximally, I hoped that they would take seriously the point, underlined here by Michael Wyschogrod and David Berger, about the Christian identification of Jesus with God, and in light of it perhaps even concede that their affirmation was too sweeping and too simple.

Similarly, the authors might have explained why their statement ignores altogether the existence of the New Testament, especially in the paragraph that begins: "Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book—the Bible." For the Jewish and the Christian Bibles are not "the same book," and in a paragraph of 90 words it should have been possible to acknowledge that fact. Nor does the statement recognize that even when it comes to the scriptures the two communities do hold in common, they often necessarily interpret them through lenses that are not shared.

In my article I raised a question about the authors' praise of Christians who embrace the state of Israel "for reasons more profound than mere politics." Do they also, I asked, welcome those whose reasons for supporting Israel lie in the distinctively Christian expectation that the ingathering of the Jewish exiles will serve as a prelude to the second coming of Jesus and the conversion of all Jews to Christianity? Here, too, I hoped for an answer—negative, affirmative, whatever—or at least for an explanation of why my question was inappropriate, if that is what the authors of *Dabru Emet* think.

I also criticized the authors' claim that "Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah." In partic-

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ular, I pointed to a stream of both ancient and modern Christian thought that sees Jesus as revealing a deeper and higher ethic than that of the Jews and their Torah. This is an ethic that Christians often present as based, variously, on love, grace, or Spirit, but emphatically not on law and commandments: a point of view that *Dabru Emet* certainly obscures and perhaps denies. I would have liked to hear their reply. (Or is this "Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity," as *Dabru Emet* is subtitled, addressed only to Christians who have modified their theology so as to bring it into conformity with Judaism? This, too, it would be good to know.)

In discussing the statement's "finely crafted paragraph" (as I called it) on the Holocaust, I wondered about the basis for the claim that, "If the Nazi extermination of the Jews had been fully successful, [Nazism] would have turned its murderous rage more directly to Christians." At the least, I wanted to know the historical source for the idea that the Nazis were planning a Holocaust-like assault on Christians (as opposed to a more intense crackdown on the minority of Christians who expressed political dissent). At most, I hoped the authors would acknowledge a critical difference: that the Holocaust was based on racial ideology, whereas the Nazi dislike of traditional Christianity had to do with the theology, ethics, and politics of the church.

I could go on, but let me just mention one other hope of mine—that the authors of *Dabru Emet* would explain why they are so confident that the "new relationship between Jews and Christians," which of course they endorse, will not weaken Jewish identity and practice. For if the two communities really are as fundamentally alike as *Dabru Emet* claims—same God, same book, same moral principles, etc.—and if (as is widely acknowledged) the social barriers between Jews and Gentiles have largely collapsed in America, it seems to me that defections from Judaism (whether through intermarriage or conversion) will become vastly easier to accomplish and traditional Jewish resistance to such defections will come to seem increasingly retrograde and parochial, even racist. I hoped the authors would let the readers of COMMENTARY know the grounds for their unqualified optimism that this will not be the case.

EVERY SINGLE one of these questions goes unaddressed in the response to my article by the four authors of *Dabru Emet*. Instead, they accuse me of (inter alia) a "contemptuous dismissal of [their] project," "unjust condemnation of [their] very motives," and "bad faith," and they profess themselves unable to answer me so long as I am in my "present state of mind." But I did not dismiss their project. I subjected it to analysis. Nor did I express contempt for it. The motives I ascribed to the authors were entirely benign—to achieve a relationship with Christians characterized by "not just agreement but mutual affirmation." At the same time, however, I expressed my intellectual judgment that the result of their labors—unintentionally, but inevitably—was seriously flawed in both conception and execution. As for the charge that I wrote in bad faith, is good faith to be measured in increments of agreement?

Nor are the diverse matters I raised for discussion clarified much in the book that the authors accuse me of "totally ignoring." This worthwhile volume, which I footnoted in my article, consists of essays by Jews and Christians offering a variety of views, none of them designated as representing the view of *Dabru Emet* itself. The essays are not cast as explications of the eight paragraphs of the statement, and indeed the invitations to contribute to this volume predated the appearance of *Dabru Emet*. Some of the questions I raised are treated in the book; others are not. Whether any of them is "answered," as the four authors of the statement here claim, is a separate issue. One of the Jewish contributors to the book was Elliot Dorff, who now states in his refreshingly frank letter that he is considering withdrawing his signature from *Dabru Emet* in light of my article.

Not only do the authors fail to respond to my arguments; they seem to have had trouble understanding them. Thus, in the last paragraph of their letter, if I read it aright, they accuse me of an "instinctive repugnance" toward Christians, something they say they find perplexing. I can dispel their perplexity, and refute the charge, by quoting exactly from my article:

> One need hardly be an advocate of interfaith hostility to observe that two communities that feel an instinctive repugnance toward each other are unlikely to form an amalgam, whether through acculturation or intermarriage. By the same token, communities that have largely overcome their animosity and moved to mutual respect, as Jews and Christians have done to a significant extent in the United States, must look elsewhere for such reinforcements to group identity as existed under the older and more contentious arrangement.

Clearly, the four authors of *Dabru Emet* have read me in a way diametrically opposed to my meaning. My point was, and is, that "instinctive repugnance" is largely a thing of the past, at least in the United States. With the social factor thus neutralized, the maintenance of Jewish identity has become correspondingly more dependent on the religious dimension. That is precisely why, contrary to the claim of *Dabru Emet*, the presentation of Judaism and Christianity as fundamentally and thoroughly alike is hardly a risk-free enterprise.

Finally, the authors of *Dabru Emet* tell us that their document is "a political statement, offered to arouse attention and to provide the minimal common ground needed for any serious discussion." This is a new point: it is certainly not how the document refers to itself, or indeed what one would be led to expect from a statement that, as I have noted, places its emphasis in at least one crucial respect on considerations that are "far more

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profound than mere politics." Be that as it may, once the hoped-for "serious discussion" commenced, was it not inevitable that theologians would draw attention to points that the political statement neglects or misinterprets in pursuit of its desired comity? As I indicated in my article, my own view is that pursuing interreligious dialogue as if it were an exercise in political negotiation or conflict resolution inevitably hampers the conversation and distorts the traditions in dialogue. A genuine dialogue is vigorous and muscular, an exercise in which participants do not automatically strive to present their own tradition as nearly identical to the other's, or to meet in some imagined middle.

LET ME now turn to the letters from individuals. Peter Ochs (who is one of the four authors of *Dabru Emet* and thus also signed the collective response) finds me so mired in the "old dichotomies" as to fail to appreciate that "a renewed Judaism . . . is recovering its confidence and sense of purpose" and "should make its wisdom known in the public square." But the underlying conception of *Dabru Emet* is anything but new. It is, in fact, a staple of American interreligious dialogue over the past half-century: the idea of a Judeo-Christian tradition. Already in 1969, the late Arthur A. Cohen attacked this conception of the relationship of Judaism to Christianity as "shot through with falsification, distortion, and untruth." Surely a statement that is "speaking on behalf of a Judaism that is recovering its confidence and sense of purpose" would not be so squeamish about acknowledging crucial differences with Christianity. And how can "our revitalized Judaism . . . make its wisdom known in the public square" when it can barely distinguish itself from the majority religion and professes to have the identical moral principles?

I must add to Peter Ochs that nowhere in my article did I fault Jews for "study of their neighbors' Christianity," which happens to be a lifelong pursuit of my own. This objection is a complete red herring.

Similarly to Nicholas de Lange, who is so upset by the six paragraphs I devoted to classical Christian anti-Judaism—in an article seven pages long—that he neglects my oft-repeated acknowledgment of today's dramatically different situation. Besides, I should think that most advocates of Jewish-Christian dialogue would not want the gruesome status quo ante to be forgotten, and would hesitate to label reminders of it as "poison."

IN THE judgment of Eugene Fisher, *Dabru Emet* holds open the possibility of a final redemption in which Christianity will have already vanished. I leave it to others to ascertain whether this is indeed the sense of the document, and, if so, whether that would conform to the political purposes its authors now impute to it. More serious is Mr. Fisher's disagreement with my claim that many Christians have, from the beginning, seen the ethic preached by Jesus as an improvement upon the Torah, or a radicalization of it. If Mr. Fisher truly thinks this theology (evidenced already in the Sermon on the Mount) is no longer widespread among Christians, I would refer him to sources ranging from broadcast evangelists to distinguished professors of theology and the Christian scriptures. Here, for example, are the words of the widely used introduction to the New Testament by Helmut Koester:

> From the perspective of the situation under God's rule, the law of the Old Testament is criticized [in the teaching of Jesus] insofar as it does not correspond to the original will of the creator. . . . True justice and mercy are thus shortchanged, because righteousness according to the law permits the establishment of walls between human beings instead of the razing of those walls.

Eugene Fisher also faults me for saying that Catholicism teaches that "the Church . . . has replaced the Jewish people, Abraham's natural descendants." Those words of mine referred not to Catholicism but to the apostle Paul, who, as I noted, vacillates on the issue. As for whether the Catholic Church has repudiated supersessionism, Mr. Fisher, of the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, might consult *Dominus Iesus*, a Vatican declaration promulgated about six weeks before *Dabru Emet*. It tells us quite forthrightly that "The first Christians encountered the Jewish people, showing them the fulfillment of salvation that went beyond the Law." Nor is any exception admitted to the judgment articulated in *Dominus Iesus* concerning "the followers of other religions"—that "*objectively speaking* they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation."

But it is on the Holocaust that Mr. Fisher is most gravely, and most dangerously, misinformed. I never denied that the Nazis detested traditional Christianity and persecuted Christians whose conscience led them to speak or act against the Reich. But did Nazi ideology represent, "from top to bottom, a rejection of all that the Christian churches stood for"? And is *Dabru Emet* therefore right that, as he puts it, "the churches were the Nazis' obvious next target"?

That is hardly the whole story. Mr. Fisher has at the very least forgotten about the church group known as the German Christians, whose name was suggested to them by the Fuehrer himself and who, in the words of an authoritative English-language study, "sang hymns to Jesus but also to Hitler." These pro-Nazi churchmen numbered well over a half-million, and perhaps many more, and controlled most university faculties of theology. Mr. Fisher may wish to argue that the German Christians did not practice authentic Christianity; even so, it is quite a leap to conclude that, once the Final Solution of the Jewish problem had succeeded, the Nazis planned a Holocaust-like fate for *these Christians* as well. As for the tragic fate of many Catholic clergy in Poland, Mr. Fisher needs to ask whether the Nazis killed them be-

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cause they were Catholic or because they were Polish. If the former, why did the Nazis fail to treat similarly the Catholic clergy of Germany, France, and Italy (including Pope Pius XII)?

Rabbi Charles L. Arian is correct: knowledge of Christianity and a positive evaluation of it do not pose a threat to Jewish identity, but ignorance of Judaism does. The problem, however, comes when the two religions are presented as minor variations on a common theme—equally valid denominational variants of some overarching Judeo-Christian tradition. Under such a dispensation, it is hard to imagine that in a period of increased denomination-switching, the change will be to the advantage of Judaism.

Leora Batnitzky's thoughtful letter calls for a new practice of interfaith dialogue, much more sophisticated and much more credible than the old mode in which stress was placed on how alike we all are. She believes that "the proper aim of interreligious conversation should not be mutual affirmation but the opportunity for each party to clarify its own position and even judgment of the other." But if that is so, why did she sign *Dabru Emet*? What kind of "judgment of the other" can there be when a Judaism without law, commandments, or Oral Torah expresses its unconditional approval of a Christianity without New Testament, Trinity, Incarnation, or—to give one last example—Mary, Mother of God?

For the same reason, I cannot accept Rabbi Ruth Langer's "cardinal principle of dialogue." It is one thing to grasp "the other's self-understanding" accurately. It is something altogether different to make that self-understanding normative for one's own evaluation of the other, as if each community's self-conception were infallible and beyond critique. On that assumption, no religious tradition could ever have much to say to outsiders, and dialogue would degenerate into monologues of mutual affirmation.

Sister Margaret Shepherd suggests intriguingly that the inadequacies of *Dabru Emet* derive from the fact that it stands at "the beginning of a process of dialogue," in the manner of Catholicism in the mid-1960's. But Jewish-Christian dialogue, at least in America, is hardly in its infancy; I first got involved in it over 35 years ago. It is time, in short, for a *mature* interreligious dialogue—which is why, although I agree with Rabbi Samuel M. Silver that "a white lie" is occasionally justified by the need to "shad[e] the truth for the sake of comity," I do not agree that this is such an occasion. And even if I did, I would not name the resultant document after the words of a Hebrew prophet exhorting us to "speak the truth to one another."

As Noah Millman correctly observes, Judaism's relationship to Christianity differs from its relationship to other religions. Whether this means that Jews should regard Christians as exempt from the Noahide commandments and bound by some other set of norms is, however, doubtful. As for Maimonides' notion that Christianity (along with Islam) prepares the way for the acceptance of God's rule, this is a kind of Jewish counterpart to Christian supersessionism, and I doubt that many signatories of *Dabru Emet* would endorse it. The statement does stipulate, after all, that "We do not see [Christianity] as an extension of Judaism."

Mark Bernstein wants Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to work toward peace and good relations. I do, too, and I would include other religions and worldviews in the same wish. We part company on the question of whether Jews should pursue this worthy goal by muting their tradition so that it dissolves into "the sublime monotheistic vision [these three traditions] share."

THE LETTER from the distinguished theologian Michael Wyschogrod is especially important, for it was he who first suggested to the Jewish scholars at the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies that they prepare a statement about Christianity. That he declined to sign the document that was finally produced and now draws attention to its evasions should suffice to demonstrate that opposition to *Dabru Emet* is not tantamount to a dislike of Jewish-Christian dialogue, an enterprise to which he has contributed for several decades.

The supportive letters from Jacob Neusner and Steven Brizel point to the oddity that several Orthodox Jews signed *Dabru Emet*. My suspicion is that they did so out of a commendable wish to show solidarity with sympathetic Christians in an age of increasingly dangerous secularism, and out of a less than commendable failure to give proper scrutiny to the theological claims the statement actually makes. The letter of Elliott Dorff, a leading figure in the Conservative movement, suggests that the Orthodox signatories were not alone in this.

I want to thank David Berger for his letter and his incisive evaluation of *Dabru Emet*. Steven Fine raises an interesting question: what effect will *Dabru Emet* have on the increasingly important dialogues of Judaism with *non*-Christian religions? He is surely right that the position of its Jewish signatories—who greet the conversion of non-Jews to Christianity with joy—will not help relations with Hindus, Buddhists, and other non-Christian groups.

Finally, I thank Walter L. Michel for directing us to his own critique of *Dabru Emet*. Pastor Michel's letter reinforces doubts about how deeply the repudiation of supersessionism has penetrated Christianity. To what degree, for example, may the reflexive anti-Israel sentiment increasingly rampant in liberal Christian circles be seen as a resurgence of classical anti-Jewish theology, which sees exile as the condign fate of the perfidious and murderous Jews? At a more abstract level, to what degree *can* Christianity maintain its own core convictions without claiming to have superseded Judaism in some respect?

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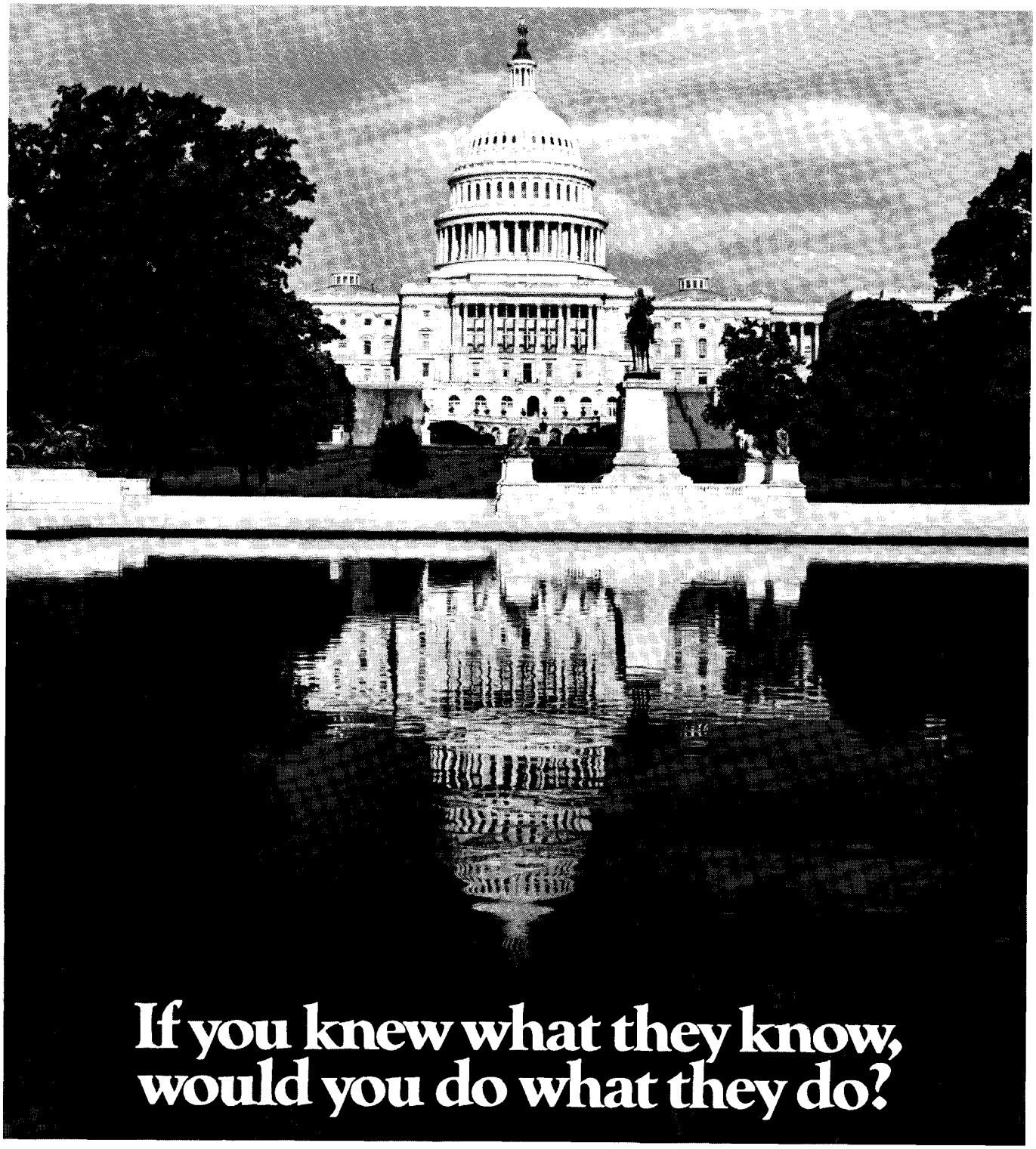

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Commentary
April 2002

Israel's War

Efraim Karsh

Late in February, in the first such action since Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority opened its war of attrition in October 2000, Israel undertook military operations against terrorist bases in two Palestinian refugee camps. For many Israelis, this move was long overdue: terrorists had been operating with virtual impunity from inside these camps, where they had stockpiled large stores of weapons and were able to mobilize and train new recruits with utter freedom. To some in Israel, it even seemed that rooting out these terrorists might herald a turning point in the eighteen-month confrontation. "If we carry out clear-cut missions in two or three refugee camps, the rest will crumble," argued Brigadier-General Efraim Eitam. "They'll . . . understand there is no military benefit to their conflict."

Critics of this strategy were no less convinced that it was misconceived: "not a calculated risk," as one of them put it, "but a dangerous gamble," bound to inflame still further the ongoing cycle of violence. "The politicians are demanding that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) achieve the impossible: military victory," wrote the respected political commentator Yoel Marcus even before the operation took place. He went on:

> This kind of victory was achieved [by Israel] in 1967 by conquering Sinai and the Suez Canal, and in 1973 by encircling the [Egyptian] Third Army and threatening Cairo. It was achieved by threatening Damascus. But military victory over an entire nation is not possible when the government has no political objective.

Marcus's point seemed to be vindicated when the incursions into the refugee camps were met with fierce and almost instantaneous reprisals in the form of Palestinian suicide bombings and other attacks on Israeli civilians. But the analysis on which it rests is flawed. In the narrow sense, Israel's actions in the current *intifada* have been no more directed at "victory over an entire nation" than the 1991 Gulf war led by Washington was directed against the Iraqi nation, or the anti-Taliban campaign of the last months has been directed against ordinary Afghans. For several years now, virtually the entire Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza has been under the hegemony of the Palestinian Authority, and no one in authority in Israel desires to reoccupy those territories or to reassert rule over them. The conflict, rather, is with a ruthless and militant leadership that has itself always viewed "armed struggle" as its primary political instrument—if not its raison d'être—and that has no compunction about using its own people as pawns in the pursuit of extremist and uncompromising goals.

In a larger sense, though, Marcus has touched on a real truth about modern warfare, albeit one whose

Efraim Karsh *is head of Mediterranean studies at King's College, University of London, and the author (with Inari Karsh) of* Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923. *His articles in* Commentary *include "The Palestinians and the 'Right of Return'" (May 2001).*

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significance seems to have eluded him. Victory "over an entire nation" is indeed feasible when political objectives are clear, and such victories have occurred regularly throughout modern history. Ever since war was transformed in the late 18th century from a contest between professional armies into a clash between whole national entities, its outcome has been decisively dependent on the vicissitudes of national morale. No nation can sustain a prolonged war unless an influential portion of its population endorses the effort and is willing to make the necessary sacrifices, and victory or defeat in such a war is often determined less by battlefield strength than by sheer grit, cohesion, and persistence.

In 1948, by dint of just these qualities, the newly-born state of Israel managed to rebuff an all-out assault by the far larger and better armed Arab world, while the atomized Palestinian Arab community, lacking an equivalent sense of corporate identity, crumbled under the weight of war. Some 55 years later, however, the situation seems to have come full circle, as a militarily far stronger and economically more affluent Israeli society shows signs of fatigue and fragmentation and Palestinians appear to be on the offensive and holding their own.

Having shrewdly defined the terrorist war as a religious duty—it is called the "al-Aqsa *intifada*," after the mosque in Jerusalem—both the Palestinian Authority and its tightly controlled media have gone out of their way to extol not just every suicide bomber but every casualty of war as a holy martyr, thus instilling in the Palestinian people fresh zeal for the battle against their much better equipped foe. At the same time, expressions of Israeli self-doubt or dissent, like the recent refusal of some reserve officers to serve in the disputed territories, are widely trumpeted throughout the Palestinian world as confirming the rightness of the Palestinian cause and its inevitable triumph—and the rightness, as well, of the path of military confrontation over the path of compromise and negotiation.

In the national struggle in which the Palestinian people are engaged, argues Hassan al-Kashef, director-general of the Palestinian information ministry, the point is to break the will of the Israelis to resist. In a recent article in *al-Hayat al-Jadida*, the official daily of the Palestinian Authority, al-Kashef asserts that the "most effective negotiator" in this struggle is not the talker or the diplomat but "the fighter active in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem":

> We will lose much, and the loss will be shameful and historic, if we agree [now] to restore calm with security measures requiring us to protect the occupation's soldiers, bases, and settlers. We will lose even more by agreeing to an interim solution that solves nothing and does not put an end to occupation. We will lose [the military] interaction with the Israeli society—an interaction that brings 1,000 Israeli [army] officers to take a stand and 14,000 Israelis to demonstrate in Tel Aviv.
>
> We will lose if we extricate [Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon from the crisis he is in—a crisis that will cause him to end his life in political and military defeat. Economically and militarily, Sharon will bring Israel nothing but the worst [predicament] in its history.*

HASSAN AL-KASHEF displays a keener grasp of the realities of war and peace than do some of his Israeli counterparts. While war (in Clausewitz's famous formula) may be the continuation of politics by other means, it is frequently also the engine that drives the political process. The long peace enjoyed by 19th-century Europe was established only after the defeat of the continent's main revisionist power, Napoleonic France; the present European order was established only after the smashing of the Nazi bid for world mastery. Even in the relatively rare cases in which there has been no clear military decision one way or another, post-war arrangements in the modern world have almost always reflected the prevailing balance of power between the belligerents. In the words of the British military historian Michael Howard, "It is hard to think of any nation-state, with the exception of Norway, that came into existence before the middle of the 20th century which was not created, or had its boundaries defined, by wars, by internal violence, or by a combination of the two."

Certainly the Middle East has been no exception to this rule. The contemporary state system in that part of the world is a relic of World War I, in the aftermath of which the European powers and their regional allies dismembered the defeated Ottoman empire and distributed the parts in accordance with their interests. But the artificiality and instability of the resultant regimes also guaranteed that violence would continue to plague the Middle East at both the local and the regional levels.

This is not so difficult to understand. Israel excepted, the Middle East is still a place where the role of the absolute leader supersedes the role of political institutions, and where citizenship is largely synonymous with submission. Power in Arab coun-

* Translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute, MEMRI (www.memri.org).

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tries is often concentrated in the hands of small and oppressive minorities (Alawites in Syria, Sunnis in Iraq); religious, ethnic, and tribal conflicts abound; for sovereigns, the overriding preoccupation is survival. In such circumstances, it is hardly to be wondered at that the main if not the sole instrument of political discourse is physical force.

The scale and the endemic nature of violence in the region are hard to exaggerate. In most Arab countries, political dissent is dealt with by repression, and ethnic and religious differences are settled by internecine strife and murder. (One need only mention Syria's massacres of its Muslim activists in the early 1980's, or the brutal treatment of Iraq's Shiite and Kurdish communities and of the Christian minority in southern Sudan.) As for foreign policy, it, too, is often pursued by means of crude force, ranging from terrorism and subversion to outright aggression. In the Yemenite, Lebanese, and Algerian civil wars, hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians perished; the Iran-Iraq war claimed nearly a million lives.

Nor has this violence been the sole property of the likes of Saddam Hussein, Hafez al-Assad, and Ayatollah Khomeini. The affable and thoroughly Westernized King Hussein of Jordan did not shrink from slaughtering thousands of Palestinians during the single month of September 1970, known as "Black September," when his throne came under threat from Palestinian guerrilla organizations.

So, too, in the case of Arab policy toward Israel. From the very beginning, the Arabs' primary instrument for opposing Jewish national aspirations was violence, and what determined Arab politics and diplomacy was the relative success or failure of that instrument in any given period. As early as April 1920, Arab nationalists sought to thwart Zionist activity (and to rally support for incorporating Palestine into the short-lived Syrian kingdom headed by King Faisal ibn Hussein) by carrying out a pogrom in Jerusalem in which five Jews were killed and 211 wounded. The following year, Arab riots claimed a far higher toll—some 90 dead and hundreds wounded. In the summer of 1929, another wave of violence resulted in the death of 133 Jews and the wounding of hundreds more.

For quite some time, this confrontational approach seemed to be working. It was especially effective in influencing the British, who had been appointed the mandatory power in Palestine by the League of Nations. Though the explicit purpose of the British was to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, the mandatory authorities repeatedly gave in to Arab violence aimed at averting that purpose and to the demands that followed upon it. In two White Papers, issued in 1922 and 1930 respectively, Great Britain severely compromised the prospective Jewish national home by imposing harsh restrictions on immigration and land sales to Jews.

In July 1937, Arab violence reaped its greatest reward when a British commission of inquiry, headed by Lord Peel, recommended repudiating the terms of the mandate altogether in favor of partitioning Palestine into two states: a large Arab state, united with Transjordan, that would occupy some 90 percent of the mandate territory, and a Jewish state in what was left. This was followed in May 1939 by another White Paper that imposed even more draconian restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchases, closing the door of Palestine to Jews desperate to flee Nazi Europe and threatening the survival of the Jewish national project. Agitating for more, the Arabs dismissed both plans as insufficient.

They did the same in November 1947 when, in the face of the imminent expiration of the British mandate, the UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine; rejecting this solution, the Arab nations resolved instead to destroy the state of Israel at birth and gain the whole for themselves. This time, however, Arab violence backfired spectacularly. In the 1948-49 war, not only did Israel confirm its sovereign independence and assert control over somewhat wider territories than those assigned to it by the UN partition resolution, but the Palestinian Arab community was profoundly shattered, with about half of its population fleeing to other parts of Palestine and to neighboring Arab states.

For decades to come, inter-Arab politics would be driven by the determination to undo the consequences of the 1948 defeat, duly dubbed "al-Naqba," the catastrophe, and to bring about Israel's demise. This phase culminated in June 1967 in yet another major war that was irretrievably to change the course of Middle Eastern history.

It was, indeed, the magnitude of the Israeli victory in the Six-Day war of 1967 that punctured the bubble of denial and forced at least some Arabs to confront the reality of Jewish statehood. Even Gamal Abdel Nasser, the high priest of pan-Arabism and champion of the 1967 Arab campaign, seemed to recoil from the ideals he had preached for so long. A few days before the outbreak of hostilities in June 1967, Nasser had proudly prophesied

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that "the battle will be total and our basic aim will be the destruction of Israel." A couple of years later, shaken by defeat, he was scolding the Arab leaders who were still urging Egypt to resume hostilities: "You issue statements, but we have to fight. If you want to liberate, then get in line in front of us."

The trauma of the 1967 war thus suggested to the Arabs that military force had its limits, and that the death of Israel might have to be pursued in other ways. If that war was fought with a view to destroying the state physically, the next war, in October 1973, launched by Nasser's successor Anwar Sadat, had the far narrower objective of triggering a political process that would allow Egypt to regain the territories lost in 1967. Israel's remarkable military recovery in October 1973 after having been caught off-guard further reinforced Sadat's determination to abandon the path of outright violence, and culminated in the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of March 1979.

But it would be wrong to construe that treaty as a fundamental acceptance of Israel's legitimacy. While one can only speculate about Sadat's own ultimate intentions—he was assassinated in October 1981 for having gone as far toward peace with Israel as he did—there is little doubt that *his* successor, Hosni Mubarak, has never had any desire to transform the formal Egyptian peace with Israel into a genuine reconciliation. For Mubarak, peace is of no value in and of itself; rather, it is the price Egypt has had to pay for such substantial benefits as U.S. economic and military aid.

Over the decades, Mubarak has reduced interaction with Israel to the lowest possible level, while simultaneously transforming the Egyptian army into a formidable modern force. He has also fostered a culture of virulent anti-Semitism in Egypt, a culture whose premises he himself evidently shares. Here is his candid assessment of the lessons and consequences of the 1973 war:

> Against us stood the most intelligent people on earth—a people that controls the international press, the world economy, and world finances. We succeeded in compelling the Jews to do what we wanted; we received all our land back, up to the last grain of sand! We have outwitted them, and what have we given them in return? A piece of paper! . . . We were shrewder than the shrewdest people on earth! We managed to hamper their steps in every direction. We have established sophisticated machinery to control and limit to the minimum contacts with the Jews. We have proven that making peace with Israel does not entail Jewish domination and that there is no obligation to develop relations with Israel beyond those we desire.*

If this is the view of the leader of the largest and most powerful Arab state, other Arab players, with the partial exception of Jordan, have similarly never felt the need to acknowledge the Jewish state's legitimacy, and have declined even the most tempting offers in exchange for normalized relations. Four successive Israeli prime ministers, from Yitzhak Rabin to Ehud Barak, were willing to return the Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for peace. The late Hafez al-Assad rejected every proposal, not because of petty squabbles over a few hundred yards of territory around the Sea of Galilee but out of a fundamental unwillingness to acquiesce formally in the very existence of the "neo-Crusader state," whose fate, Assad never tired of reiterating, would eventually be that of the medieval Crusader kingdom before it.

As for the Palestinians, they too have persistently denied legitimacy to Israel, denigrated Jewish history, and even gone so far as to repudiate any Jewish connection to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem or, by implication, to the land of Israel itself. All in all, and up until now, contractual peace with Israel has represented, for the Arab party, not a recognition of legitimacy but a tacit admission that, at least for the time being, the Arabs have been unable to defeat Israel by force of arms.

THE REALITY I have been sketching was keenly recognized by at least some Zionist leaders at a very early stage of the conflict. In a 1923 article entitled "The Iron Wall," Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founding father of the branch of Zionism that was the forerunner of today's Likud party, argued that Arab acquiescence in the Jewish national revival in Palestine would only follow upon the establishment of an unassailable Zionist power base—political, diplomatic, and military.

"So long as the Arabs have a glimmer of hope to get rid of us," wrote Jabotinsky in his characteristically frank tone,

> no smooth talking or far-reaching promises will induce them to relinquish this hope, precisely because they are not a riffraff but a living people. And a living people will be ready to yield on such fateful questions only when it has

* Mubarak made this impromptu statement in 1991 in the course of an address to students at Cairo University. His remarks were taken down by Ephraim Dowek, an Egyptian Jew then serving as Israel's ambassador to Egypt, and they appear in Dowek's book, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations, 1980-2000* (2001). Apart from attending the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin, Mubarak has never visited Israel.

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> lost all hope of "ridding itself" [of foreign settlers]: when there is not the slightest crack in the iron wall. Only then will the extremist groups with their slogan "No, never" lose their influence, which will shift to the moderate groups. And only then will the moderate groups approach us with suggestions for mutual concessions and begin honest negotiations with us on such practical matters as guarantees against pushing them out, and equality of civil and national rights. It is my hope and belief that we shall then give them such guarantees that will satisfy them, and that both peoples will be able to live as good neighbors. But the only road to such an agreement passes through the iron wall.

The history of the Arab-Israeli conflict over the past century vindicates Jabotinsky's stark prognosis. It has been Israel's technological edge, the performance of its armed forces, the commitment and resilience of its society, and, above all, its decisive military victories that have gradually driven the Arabs toward the path of politics and a grudging acceptance. Every Arab defeat, every military setback, has meant an increased acquiescence in the reality of Israel. By contrast, every perceived crack in Israel's "iron wall" has meant a revival of the old dream of destroying the state utterly.

In the 1990's, the Oslo accords, the biggest of all cracks in the "iron wall," provided the ultimate proof of Jabotinsky's thesis. Here was Israel extending the hand of friendship and inviting Yasir Arafat back from exile. And here was the PLO, the "sole representative of the Palestinian people," ostensibly saying it was willing to shed its historic commitment to the destruction of Israel, to renounce the use of violence as a political tool, and to accept a territorial compromise based on a two-state solution. But as the actual behavior of the PLO and the Palestinian Authority over the past decade reveals, beneath the rhetoric of compromise lay the old commitment to violence and to victory, now fueled by Israeli accommodation.

Yasir Arafat himself testified as much within months of the September 1993 ceremony on the White House lawn when, at a closed meeting with South African Muslim leaders, he asserted that the Oslo agreements fell into the same category as the Treaty of Hudaibiya signed by the Prophet Muhammad with the people of Mecca in 628, only to be reneged on a couple of years later when the situation tilted in Muhammad's favor. In the year 2001, the prominent Palestinian "moderate," Faisal al-Husseini, was even more explicit, describing the Oslo process as a "Trojan Horse" designed to promote the strategic goal of "Palestine from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea"—that is, to a Palestine in place of Israel.

While speaking the language of peace to Israeli and Western audiences, Arafat, from the moment of his arrival in Gaza after his years of exile in Tunisia, began to lay the ground for an eventual confrontation with Israel. Hence his failure to disarm the terrorist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad as required by the Oslo accords, and his tacit approval of the murder of hundreds of Israelis by these groups; hence the creation of a far larger Palestinian army (the so-called police force) than was permitted by the accords; hence the frantic acquisition of prohibited weapons; hence the reluctance to abrogate those clauses in the Palestine National Covenant calling for Israel's destruction; hence the systematic indoctrination of the Palestinian public, especially schoolchildren, with violent anti-Semitic and anti-Israel propaganda; and hence the Palestinian Authority's resort to outright mass violence, first in September 1996 with a view to discrediting the then newly-elected Benjamin Netanyahu and then in October 2000 as a means of turning the tables on Netanyahu's successor, Ehud Barak.

What enabled Arafat to pursue his war preparations was a combination of international sympathy for his cause and Israeli self-delusion. Fatigued by decades of fighting, and yearning for a normalcy that would allow them at last to enjoy their recently won affluence, many Israelis clung to the Oslo process as to an amulet, turning a blind eye to the evolving danger at their doorstep. Even Netanyahu, for all his scathing criticism of Oslo, proved unable to win from Arafat the reciprocity he demanded, and was reluctantly forced to follow in the footsteps of his two predecessors, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, in surrendering territory to the Palestinian Authority without any tangible return.

In this light, Arafat's rejection of Barak's generous territorial concessions during the Camp David summit of July 2000, followed by his launching of the al-Aqsa *intifada* in October of the same year, made perfect sense. Indeed, not only did the international community react to the renewed violence by pressuring Israel to moderate *its* response, and be still more "forthcoming" to Palestinian demands, but the Barak government itself succumbed to Palestinian military pressure. In January 2001, during a summit meeting at the Egyptian resort of

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Taba, Israel's prime minister ceded virtually the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinians, together with some Israeli territory, and made breathtaking concessions over Jerusalem and the question of Palestinian refugees.

Had Arafat chosen to pocket these Israeli concessions, a Palestinian state could have been established within the very near future. Instead, and perhaps understandably from his point of view, he went for broke, insisting with renewed adamancy that no peace would be possible unless Israel guaranteed the right of the Arab refugees of the 1948 war and their descendants to return to territory that is now part of the state of Israel. Only then, faced with the prospect of the destruction of Israel through demographic subversion, did the Israeli public react decisively, voting Barak out of office within days of the Taba summit. This left Arafat little choice but to intensify his war against Israel still further in an attempt to turn the clock backward and coerce the incoming prime minister, Ariel Sharon, into concessions similar to those of his ill-fated predecessor.

AND SO the fight has gone on. In the year since Taba, numerous pleas have been voiced by a string of self-appointed referees, from the European Union to Israeli architects of the Oslo process, to end the hostilities in a strategic draw and return to the negotiating table. Such proposals, which have struck a deeper chord among Israelis than among Palestinians, are a recipe for assured disaster. Aside from the absurdity of entering into a new and more far-reaching contractual agreement with a partner who has demonstrated a perfect disregard of every previous commitment, there is the deeper legacy of violence that lies at the core of Arab political culture and that, as in the 1920's and 1930's, today seems to be bearing fruit. Similarly with calls for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the disputed territories. Just as Israel's hasty pullback from Lebanon in the summer of 2000 helped to catalyze the al-Aqsa *intifada*, so a simple evacuation of the disputed territories in the wake of years of inconclusive fighting is certain to fuel Palestinian hopes of defeating the Jews once and for all.

A new generation has come of age in the Palestinian Authority and throughout the Arab Middle East. It is a generation born after the 1967 war, that momentous event which so profoundly traumatized an older generation. For today's Arabs, the 1967 defeat is but a dim memory, one more historical injustice that has to be redressed by any means necessary. Today's young have no recollection of Israeli forces routing four Arab armies in six days in June 1967, or of Israeli tanks rolling across the Sinai in October 1973 to encircle the mighty Egyptian Third Army, or of Israeli commandos successfully raiding the Ugandan town of Entebbe, thousands of miles away, to free scores of hostages in 1976. This generation's formative experience has been, instead, of an increasingly fatigued and retreating Israel: an Israel hit in 1991 by dozens of Iraqi missiles against which it did not retaliate; an Israeli army that failed to suppress the Palestinian *intifada* of the late 1980's, and in 2000 fled from Lebanon in disarray before a small but determined guerrilla force; an Israel evidently prepared in 2001 to yield vast territories after a few months of Palestinian military pressure.

So long as the "iron wall" created during Israel's early decades continues to be eroded, both the Palestinians and the Arabs in general are bound to turn to physical force, or to the threat of physical force, to accomplish their ends. This war has already cost Israel dearly in terms of human casualties, economic and social dislocation, international reputation, and national morale; failure to end it swiftly and decisively will be nothing short of catastrophic. The first, unavoidable step must be the comprehensive and unequivocal routing of the al-Aqsa *intifada*, including the disarming of the various military organs of the Palestinian Authority and the destruction of the terrorist infrastructure of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as the arrest of the largest possible number of terrorists.

True, even a knockout blow, one that included the dismantlement of the Palestinian Authority itself, would not eliminate the propensity for violence from the Middle East's political scene; the phenomenon is simply too pervasive. Besides, the Arab peoples can absorb successive setbacks while Israel cannot afford a single decisive defeat. But it was the dawning consciousness that the costs of violence would far exceed its potential political gains that persuaded at least some Arabs to think Israel was here to stay in the first place. If only for want of other alternatives, this may be the only way to persuade others today.

—March 6, 2002

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The Return of the "Jackal Bins"

Norman Podhoretz

Following is the text (slightly modified) of the Francis Boyer Award Lecture, delivered in Washington at the annual dinner of the American Enterprise Institute on February 13, 2002, under the title "America at War: 'The One Thing Needful.'"

It is now almost exactly five months since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the question I want to explore tonight is whether September 11 hurled us into a new era of American history.

Certainly, this is how it seemed. The most obvious symptom was that once again we were saluting our now ubiquitously displayed flag. This was the very flag that, not so long ago, leftist radicals had thought fit only for burning. Yet now, even on the old flag-burning Left, a few prominent personalities were painfully wrenching their unaccustomed arms into something vaguely resembling a salute.

Contemplating these people, I was reminded of the response to the bloody suppression by the new Soviet regime under Lenin of the sailors' revolt that erupted in Kronstadt in the early 1920's. Far more murderous horrors would pour out of the malignantly tenebrous recesses of Stalinist rule, but as the first in that long series of atrocities leading to disillusionment with the Soviet Union and to breaks with the Communist party, Kronstadt—in effect a workers' revolt against the putative workers' state—became the portent of them all.

Well, September 11 served as an inverse Kronstadt for a number of radical leftists of today. What it did was raise questions about what one of them called their inveterately "negative faith in America the ugly."

September 11 reminded me, too, of a poem by W.H. Auden, transplanted from London to New York in a trade of poets (they got T.S. Eliot and we got Auden plus a few future draft picks). Auden's poem, written upon the outbreak of World War II, was entitled "September 1, 1939." It contained hostile sentiments about America left over from Auden's Communist period, but the opening lines are so evocative of September 11, 2001 that it is no wonder they were quoted so often in the early days of our new war:

> I sit in one of the dives
> On Fifty-second Street
> Uncertain and afraid
> As the clever hopes expire
> Of a low dishonest decade.

Auden's low dishonest decade, of course, was the 1930's, and its clever hopes centered on the construction of that workers' paradise in the Soviet Union. Our counterpart was the 1960's, and its less clever hopes centered not on construction, however

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illusory, but on destruction—the destruction of the institutions that made up the American way of life. For America was conceived as the great obstacle to any improvement in the lot of the wretched of the earth, not least those within its own borders.

Now, I recognize that, as James Q. Wilson has recently reminded us, the 1960's are a long way off, and are in any event not an all-purpose explanation of everything that has gone wrong with this country since then. Where the hostility of American intellectuals toward America is concerned, I myself have traced it back to the period following the Civil War. Nevertheless, I am far from alone in my conviction that the radical movement of the 1960's was the proximate source of the "negative faith in America the ugly" to which so many were converted both during and after that period.

Because, to me, the new patriotic mood represented a return to greater sanity and health, I fervently hoped that it would last. But I want to tell a story that will explain why I could not fully share the heady confidence of some of my political friends that this was a permanent and not an ephemeral change.

One day in the year 1960, I was invited to address a meeting of left-wing radicals. For my sins—sins of which I have been repenting for more than three decades by now—I was a leading member of this then tiny movement. The main issue around which it had first begun to coalesce was nuclear disarmament. But the subject on which I had been asked to speak was a new one that had barely begun to show the whites of its eyes. It was the possibility of American military involvement in a faraway place of which we knew little—a place called Vietnam.

Accompanying me that evening was the late Marion Magid, a member of my staff at COMMENTARY magazine, of which I had recently become the editor. As we entered the drafty old hall on Union Square in Manhattan, Marion surveyed the 50 or so people in the audience, and whispered to me: "Do you realize that every young person in this room is a tragedy to some family or other?"

MARION MAGID'S quip brings back to life some sense of how unpromising a future there promised to be for that bedraggled-looking assemblage. No one would have dreamed that these young people, and the generation about to descend politically and culturally from them, would within the blink of a historical eye be hailed as "the best informed, the most intelligent, and the most idealistic this country has ever known." These words, incredibly, would emanate from what the new movement regarded as the very belly of the beast: from, to be specific, the mouth of Archibald Cox, a professor at the Harvard Law School and later solicitor general of the United States. Similar encomia would also ooze unctuously from parents, teachers, clergymen, artists, and journalists.

More incredible yet, the ideas and attitudes of the new movement, cleaned up but essentially unchanged, would within a mere ten years turn one of our two major parties upside down and inside out. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy famously declared that we would "pay any price, bear any burden, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty." By 1972, George McGovern, nominated for President by Kennedy's own party, was campaigning on the slogan, "Come Home, America." It was a slogan that almost perfectly reflected the ethos of the embryonic movement that I had addressed in Union Square only about a decade before.

But the pathetic impression my audience made on Marion Magid does not begin to explain why such a development would have struck anyone present that night as so unlikely. For the new movement was bucking a national consensus that came close to being universal. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman, recognizing a threat from Soviet expansionism, had embraced the policy of containment to deal with it. A year later, running for reelection, Truman had fended off challenges both from his Right, which regarded containment as—in the young Richard Nixon's term—"cowardly," and from his Left, to which the same strategy amounted to warmongering.

Truman's victory, then, signified the coming together of the nation behind his foreign policy. But there was also a wider dimension to this burgeoning political consensus, and it was beautifully captured in a historic essay of 1947 by George F. Kennan. Much later, Kennan would deny that he had said what he said in that essay, what everyone at the time thought he had said, and what rereading the essay clearly demonstrates that he had in fact said. To wit:

> The thoughtful observer of Russian-American relations will find no cause for complaint in the Kremlin's challenge to American society. He will rather experience a certain gratitude for a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

In "pulling themselves together" precisely for these reasons and in precisely this way, the Ameri-

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can people were rewarded with a great burst of economic and political energy. Instead of the postwar depression that had been widely expected, there was unprecedented prosperity. And instead of turning inward, Americans demonstrated their willingness to pay the price in blood and treasure to fend off the advance of Stalinist totalitarianism, just as they had done after some hesitation in response to the totalitarianism of Nazi Germany. For this, too, they were rewarded, with an upsurge in pride and self-confidence.

But what was in some sense even more unprecedented was the effect on the country's intellectuals. As Marxists of one stripe or another, many of them had only recently gloried in their "alienation" from American society. Now in the early postwar years most of them became anti-Communists, and they too joined, often to their own astonishment, in what the few remaining socialists among them petulantly derided as the "American celebration."

Yet this did not result in the loss of creative power smugly predicted by the dissenters. On the contrary: the rediscovery by the formerly alienated of what Mary McCarthy, one of their brightest young stars, did not shrink from calling "America the Beautiful," gave rise to a richer high culture than that of the 1930's before or of the 1960's that followed. I am thinking of the emergence in the 1950's of a host of figures who shared, at least for a while, in the newly positive attitude toward American society: novelists like Saul Bellow; poets like Robert Lowell; critics like Lionel Trilling; philosophers like Hannah Arendt; theologians like Reinhold Niebuhr; political analysts like George Kennan himself. And the same story unfolds when we venture beyond writers into the realm of painters, sculptors, architects, and composers.

In going over this familiar ground, I am trying to make two points. One is that the nascent radical movement of the late 1950's and early 1960's was up against an adversary that looked unassailable. Yet even so—and here is my second point—to the bewilderment of almost everyone, and not least of the radicals themselves, they blew and they blew and they blew the house down. Even some of the rediscoverers of "America the Beautiful," including Mary McCarthy, did another 180-degree pirouette and contributed a bit of emphysemic blowing themselves.

Here we had a major turning point that slipped in under the radar of virtually all the pundits and the trend-spotters. How well I remember the late John Roche, a political scientist then working in the Johnson White House, being quoted by the columnist Jimmy Breslin as having dismissed the radicals as a bunch of "Upper West Side jackal bins." Jackal bins? What were jackal bins? As further investigation disclosed, Roche had said "Jacobins," a word evidently so unfamiliar to his interviewer that "jackal bins" was the best he could do with it in transcribing his notes.

Much ink has been spilled, a few gallons of it by me, in the struggle to explain how and why a great "Establishment" representing so wide a national consensus could have been toppled so easily and so quickly by so small and marginal a group as these "jackal bins." I will set aside the race riots that broke out in one city after another, because I am concentrating here exclusively on foreign affairs. In that arena, the usual answer to the question I just posed is, in a word, Vietnam—the subject of my talk that night in Union Square. In this view, it was by deciding to fight an unpopular war that the Establishment rendered itself vulnerable.

But the problem is that Vietnam was a *popular* war. At the beginning, all the major media—from the *New York Times* to the *Washington Post*, from *Time* to *Newsweek*, from CBS to ABC—supported our intervention. So did most of the professoriate. And so did the public. Even when all but one or two of the people who had either directly led us into Vietnam, or applauded our intervention, commenced falling all over themselves as they scampered to the head of the antiwar parade, public opinion continued supporting the war.

No matter: public opinion had ceased to count. Indeed, even reality itself had ceased to count. Consider the Tet offensive of 1968. It was, as all now agree and some vainly struggled to insist then, a crushing defeat for the Communists. But Walter Cronkite had only to declare it a defeat for us on the CBS *Evening News*, and a defeat it became.

Admittedly, in electoral politics, where numbers are decisive, public opinion remained potent. None of the doves contending for the presidency in 1968 or 1972 could beat Richard Nixon. But even Nixon felt it necessary to claim that he had a plan for getting us out of Vietnam. Furthermore, in another part of the forest of electoral politics—I mean the Congress—public support for the war had almost no influence.

In other words, on Vietnam, elite opinion trumped popular opinion. Nor was this phenomenon restricted to foreign policy. It extended into a newly antagonistic attitude toward America that ranged from skepticism about our character and intentions to outright hatred of everything we were and represented.

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It hardly needs stressing that this attitude found a home in—to round up the usual suspects—the world of the arts, the universities, and the major media of news and entertainment, where intellectuals shaped by the 1960's, and their acolytes in the publishing houses of New York and in the studios of Hollywood, held sway.

But it would be a serious mistake to suppose that the trickle-down effect of the professoriate's attitude was confined to literature, journalism, and show business. John Maynard Keynes once said that "Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist." Keynes was referring specifically to businessmen. But practical functionaries like bureaucrats and administrators were subject to the same rule, though they tended to be the slaves not of economists but of historians and sociologists and philosophers and novelists who were very much alive even when their ideas had, or should have, become defunct.

It was by no means necessary for the practical men to have studied the works in question, or even to have heard of the authors of those works. All they had to do was read the *New York Times*, or switch on their television sets, or go to the movies—and, drip by insidious drip, a more easily assimilable form of the original material would be absorbed into their heads and their nervous systems.

THESE, IN sum, are some of the factors that make me wonder whether September 11, 2001 will have turned out to mark a genuine turning point comparable to December 7, 1941. I was not quite twelve years old when President Roosevelt sought and obtained a declaration of war right after Pearl Harbor, but I remember the period well, and I cannot recall so much as a peep of protest out of the isolationists who had previously opposed our entry into that great conflict. And if the Germans and the Japanese now became more intensive subjects of study in this country, it was not in order to love or justify them but to learn better how to defeat them.

Now here we are in the early days of another war that may well be supported by an even larger percentage of the public than Vietnam was at the beginning. Today, however, the numerically insignificant opposition is stronger than it was in the early days of Vietnam. The reason is that it still maintains a tight grip over the institutions that had been surrendered to the anti-American Left by the end of the 1960's.

Take, for a start, the literary community, which can stand in for the world of the arts in general. No sooner had the Twin Towers been toppled and the Pentagon smashed than a fierce competition began for the gold in the anti-American Olympics. One of my old ex-friends, Susan Sontag, seized an early lead in this contest with a piece in the *New Yorker* in which she asserted that September 11 was an attack "undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions." Not content with that, she went on to compare congressional expressions of support for the man she characterized as our "robotic President" to "the unanimously applauded, self-congratulatory bromides of a Soviet Party Congress."

Another of my old ex-friends, Norman Mailer, who had been uncharacteristically slow out of the starting gate, soon came up strong on the inside by comparing the Twin Towers to "two huge buck teeth," and pronouncing the ruins at ground zero "more beautiful than the buildings were." The German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen had beaten Mailer to the punch with similar imagery, extolling the destruction of the World Trade Center as "the greatest work of art ever," against which "we composers are nothing." But Stockhausen then repented of this remark, possibly because on second thought he considered it unfair to his own music.

No such second thoughts came from Mailer. Still playing the enfant terrible even as he was closing in on his eightieth year to heaven, he gathered steam in denouncing us as "cultural oppressors and aesthetic oppressors" of the Third World. And in what did this oppression consist? It consisted, he expatiated, in our establishing "enclaves of our food out there, like McDonald's," and in putting "our high-rise buildings . . . around the airports" of even "the meanest, scummiest, capital[s] in the world."

So much for the literary community. Then there was the campus, to which I am tempted to apply Hamlet's words: "Fie on it! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,/ That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature/ Possess it merely." A report issued shortly after September 11 by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, or ACTA—whose founding chairman was Lynne V. Cheney—cited about a hundred malodorous statements wafting out of campuses all over the country that resembled Sontag and Mailer in blaming the attacks not on the terrorists but on America.

I realize that the stench emitted from the groves of academe has long since penetrated into all our nostrils. But I think another whiff would sharpen our sense of the noxious weeds still flourishing

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there that could, under the right circumstances, grow to a truly monstrous size. Here, then, are a half-dozen typical samples:

- From a professor at MIT: "The best way to begin a war on terrorism might be to look in the mirror."
- From a professor at Brown: "What happened on September 11 was terrorism, but what happened during the Gulf war was also terrorism."
- From a professor at the University of New Mexico: "Anyone who can blow up the Pentagon gets my vote."
- From a professor at Rutgers: "[We] should be aware that, whatever [September 11's] proximate cause, its ultimate cause is the fascism of U.S. foreign policy over the past many decades."
- From a professor at the University of Massachusetts: "[The American flag] is a symbol of terrorism and death and fear and destruction and oppression."
- From a professor at the University of Texas: "[The terrorist attack] was no more despicable than the massive acts of terrorism . . . that the U.S. government has committed during my lifetime."

When the ACTA report was issued, cries of "McCarthyism"—that first refuge of a left-wing scoundrel—were heard throughout the land. A *New York Times* editorial later chimed in with the epithet "repugnant." Yet what repelled the *Times* about the report was not statements like the ones I have just cited. It was that ACTA had "attacked dozens of professors for having reacted to the terrorist attacks in ways its authors considered inappropriate."

Inappropriate! One could scarcely find a better current illustration of what George Orwell meant when he wrote in 1946 that "In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible." And I cannot resist revisiting Orwell's much-circulated crack about a comparably demented piece of anti-American vitriol that a leftist British intellectual spewed out during World War II: "One has to belong to the intelligentsia to believe things like that," said Orwell; "no ordinary man could be such a fool."

But much as I revere Orwell, I prefer a homelier version of the same crack, whose author was the aunt of Saul Bellow. After overhearing a passionate ideological dispute around her own kitchen table between the future Nobel laureate for literature and his radical friends from the University of Chicago, she muttered: "Smart, smart, smart. . . . Stupid."

Like the professors in the ACTA report, Susan Sontag, too, claimed that her freedom of speech was being placed in jeopardy. In this peculiar reading of the First Amendment, she is free to say anything she likes, but the right to free speech ends where criticism of what she has said begins.

Actually, with rare exceptions, the only attempts to stifle dissent on the campus were directed at the many students and the few faculty members who supported the war against terrorism. All these attempts could be encapsulated in a single phenomenon: on a number of campuses, students or professors who displayed American flags or patriotic posters were forced to take them down.

As for Susan Sontag's freedom of speech, I have in my possession a file several inches thick containing transcripts of fawning interviews with her in periodicals and on television programs after her *New Yorker* piece appeared.

And speaking of television, it was soon inundated with material presenting Islam in the most glowing terms. Mainly, these programs took their cue from the President and other political leaders. Out of the best of motives, and for prudential reasons as well, elected officials were striving mightily to deny that the war against terrorism was a war against Islam. They therefore never ceased heaping praises on the beauties of that religion, about which few of them knew anything.

But it was from the universities, not from the politicians, that the substantive content of the broadcasts derived, in interviews with Muslim academics whose accounts of Islam were—how shall I put it?—selectively roseate. Sometimes they were even downright untruthful, especially in sanitizing the doctrine of jihad, or holy war, or in misrepresenting the extent to which leading Muslim clerics all over the world had been celebrating suicide bombers as heroes and martyrs.

I do not bring this up in order to enter into a theological dispute. My purpose, rather, is to offer another case study in the continued workings of the trickle-down effect I have already described. Thus, almost within hours after September 11, the universities began adding courses on Islam to their curricula. On the campus, understanding Islam inevitably translated into apologetics for it, and most of the media dutifully followed suit. The media also adopted the stance of neutrality between the terrorists and ourselves that prevailed among the relatively moderate professoriate, as when the major

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television networks ordered their anchors to avoid exhibiting partisanship.

Here the great exception was the Fox News Channel. The *New York Times* ran an article deploring the fact that Fox was covering the war from—O the horror! The horror!—a frankly pro-American perspective. But the *Times* was relieved that no other network had so cavalierly discarded the sacred conventions dictating that journalists, in the words of the president of ABC News, must "maintain their neutrality in times of war."

It is important to note that a few voices on the Right also blamed America for having been attacked. Speaking on Pat Robertson's TV program, the Reverend Jerry Falwell delivered himself of the view that God was punishing the United States for the moral decay exemplified by a variety of liberal groups among us. Both later apologized for singling out these groups, but each continued to insist that God was withdrawing His protection from America because all of us had become such great sinners.

On the secular Right, we had the columnist Robert Novak, along with that born-again Coughlinite Pat Buchanan. In the opinion of these two, and others of like mind, it was not our disobedience to divine law but our friendliness toward Israel that had brought this attack upon us. That bin Laden had never been much concerned with the Palestinians made no difference to Buchanan and Novak: they knew better.

For the moment, though, the major fount of oppositional action remained on the Left, and it was mainly burbling in the universities. There, Eric Foner, a professor of history at my own alma mater, Columbia, was perhaps the most prominent among those who tried to turn the tables on ACTA by risibly condemning *it* for trying "to enforce a particular party line on American colleges and universities." Foner also condemned the report as misleading, since the polls proved that there was "firm support" for the war among college students. "If our aim is to indoctrinate students with unpatriotic beliefs," Foner smirked, "we're obviously doing a very poor job of it." Well, we know that parents who shell out $35,000 a year to universities like Columbia are not getting their money's worth, but in this one perverse respect, at least, we and they can be grateful for it.

True, even at the height of the radical fevers on the campus in the 1960's, only a minority of students sided with the antiwar radicals. But the nonradical students, though they were in the majority, were unable to make themselves heard above the antiwar din, and whenever they tried, they were shouted down.

So it was on the campus after September 11. There were, here and there, brave defiers of the academic orthodoxies. But mostly, the silent majority remained, well, silent, for fear of incurring the disapproval of their teachers, or were even punished for such crimes as "insensitivity."

THE NEARLY universal confidence in America and American virtue that developed during World War II had enough momentum in it to carry us into the very different war that we would soon wage against Soviet totalitarianism. And it was strong enough to create the consensus I described a while back. But it was not strong enough to withstand the assault upon it I also sketched some moments ago.

Will the consensus that spontaneously materialized on September 11 succeed in resisting the similar assault that began to be mounted against it within hours by the guerrillas-with-tenure in the universities, along with their spiritual and political disciples scattered throughout other quarters of our culture? Can this "tiny handful of aging Rip van Winkles," as they were breezily brushed off by one recent commentator, grow into a force as powerful as the "jackal bins" of yesteryear?

The answer no doubt depends primarily both on whether we are—God forbid—hit again by terrorists and on how well the military side of the war will go. Thus, antiwar activity on some campuses was dampened by our mind-boggling success in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the mopping-up operation there created an opportunity for more subtle forms of opposition to gain traction. Complaints began to be raised about alleged tramplings of civil liberties here at home, and then about the treatment of detainees in Guantanamo.

Though these concerns were soon shown to be almost entirely baseless and even preposterous, I suppose some people raised them in good faith. But it is also true that such issues could and did serve as a respectable cover for opposition to further military action. This is how it worked during Vietnam, when demonstrably false accusations of war crimes were lodged against certain lawful American military tactics, were uncritically accepted as proved, and were then used as a potent weapon by the antiwar movement.

Be that as it may, of one thing we can be sure: as the war widens, opposition will widen along with it. We could already see this happening after President Bush spoke of an "axis of evil" in his State of the

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Union speech in late January. In this single image, the President brilliantly defined our present enemies as a fusion of those we fought in World War II with the evil empire we battled in World War III, which is the name that one of our leading students of military strategy, Eliot A. Cohen, has rightly suggested we give to the cold war. The President now promised an expansion of the war to regimes that may or may not have been directly involved in September 11 but whose leaders were preparing to threaten us with weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, he declared that he would if necessary attack them preemptively. And he reiterated that we would prefer to fight along with allies, but that if we had to, we would go it alone.

As well we might have to do, given the anger and contempt this wonderfully bold declaration aroused throughout the world. Even the Europeans, after offering us their condolences over September 11, could scarcely let a decent interval pass before going back into the ancient family business of trying to prove how vastly superior in wisdom and finesse they were to us. Now they mocked the President as "simplistic," while urging that our military operations end with Afghanistan, and that we leave the rest to diplomacy, in deferential consultation with the great masters of that recondite art in Paris and Brussels.

At home, much the same position was expressed by the *New York Times* and other publications ranging from the Center to the hard Left. In these precincts the President was hit for recklessness and overreaching, while terms redolent of Vietnam like "slippery slope" and "quagmire" were resurrected. Yet unlike the antiwar movement during Vietnam, which was almost completely made up of leftists and liberals, today's developing opposition resembles the one we had during the run-up to the Gulf war. That is, a coalition is being formed of the hard Left, elements of the soft Left, and sectors of the American Right.

In a pungent foretaste of this bizarre ideological cocktail, Michael Kinsley on the soft Left recently allied himself with Pat Buchanan on the hard Right in indicting the President for evading the Constitution by proposing to fight undeclared wars. Meanwhile, the same charge was moving into the political mainstream through Democratic Senators like Robert Byrd, along with complaints from Senator Tom Daschle about the concept of an "axis of evil," from which his advisers only yesterday persuaded him to retreat somewhat. Only yesterday, too, Al Gore endorsed the concept, but—like some Republican Senators earlier—he simultaneously endorsed the whining over American "unilateralism" in the chancelleries and chattering classes of Europe. There, it seems, they agree that an axis of evil does exist, but it is made up not of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea but of Dick Cheney, Don Rumsfeld, and Condi Rice. Anyhow, all the toing-and-froing by the politicians was accompanied by a thousand reasons as to why the Bush Doctrine in its present form was the wrong way to go.

As this kind of thing metastasizes, a great responsibility will fall upon those of us who stand in awe of the moral courage and the strategic clarity President Bush has increasingly drawn out of his heart and soul and mind and guts since September 11. We will need to mobilize all our intellectual firepower to fight off the arguments against the Bush Doctrine, and to expose them for what they really are: appeasement and defeatism traveling under other names.

Here an analogy with World War III may be illuminating. I believe that Ronald Reagan led us to victory in that war by reversing the post-Vietnam decline of American military might and by resuming a vigorous ideological struggle against the "evil empire." For this he too, like President Bush today, was ridiculed as a simpleton and a "cowboy." Which is why I also believe that no one campaigning on such promises could have been elected in 1980, and then could have prevailed in office over his ideological foes, if the ground had not been prepared by the neoconservative intellectuals who had for more than ten years been waging a fierce war of ideas against their former colleagues on the Left.

To be sure, the neoconservative contingent was preceded by conservatives to the manner born—and all honor to them. But the neoconservatives constituted a fresh wave of reinforcements. And because they possessed a more intimate fix on the positions of their old political allies, they were able to mount a newly aggressive and more precisely targeted offensive against the defamation of America by the Left, while effectively revivifying the case for regarding the Soviet Union as, yes, an evil empire.

My contention is that September 11 will have given rise to a genuine transformation only if, once again, the military forces we deploy are undergirded by an equally formidable intellectual campaign. Maybe the September 11 Kronstadters, those few veteran radical leftists who suddenly found themselves saluting the flag, will eventually take on this job. So far, however, they seem to be stopping short of a more thoroughgoing reconsideration of the assumptions behind their old faith in "America the ugly."

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Hence, for the time being, if—in a phrase I am borrowing from Matthew Arnold who borrowed it from the Gospel of Luke—"the one thing needful" is to be done, we old soldiers and our younger colleagues will have to do it pretty much on our own. A beginning has been made by a few dozen scholars, some of them fellow old soldiers here with us tonight, who have only just issued an open letter supporting the war. Their statement, entitled "What We're Fighting For," is an effort to counter the dogmas regnant on the campus. But it is, I fear, a little too defensive, and dwells too much on how far short this country falls from perfection, to satisfy the full demands of "the one thing needful."

What are those demands? To describe them in language I have frequently used before, but that cannot be repeated too often, they are, first, to remind ourselves, and then to teach our woefully miseducated children, that this country enjoys more freedom and more prosperity more widely shared than any nation in the history of the world. It has thereby earned a place for itself among the greatest of all human civilizations. We need, after dwelling for so long on what may be wrong with us, to remember, and to celebrate, how much more is right and good and noble. We need to realize that the answer to the plaintively asked question, "Why do they hate us?," is not for whatever crimes we may have committed, but for our accomplishments and our virtues.

Correlatively, we need to understand more clearly that these accomplishments and virtues have their source in the institutions designed by our founding fathers—institutions that have, just as they hoped, conduced to "the preservation of the blessings of liberty" for their posterity. Which is to say, us.

I for one pray that our victory in this war—World War IV—will result in the creation of conditions under which the same blessings can be heaped upon as many countries as possible. And I pray that it will set Islam onto a path of reformation from within. Both Judaism and Christianity began undergoing such a process centuries ago. Why should Islam alone remain forever exempt?

"AMERICA! AMERICA!"—sang Katharine Lee Bates in 1893—"God shed His grace on thee." Appealing to God to shed the same grace on the rest of the world can no doubt be taken as a call for American imperialism. I confess that the word imperialism does not frighten me, but since a term like "leadership" would be less incendiary, I will resort to it.

In advocating such leadership by America, I do not make light of the widespread doubts that this country, by its very nature, is endowed either with the will or the skill to play even a benevolently imperial role in the world. But then the cadences of George F. Kennan in 1947 spring reassuringly back into my ears. To my delight, I heard echoes of his words in President Bush's State of the Union speech. I heard them when he opened by affirming that it was *history* that had called America to action, and that it was "both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight," and then again when he concluded that this represented "a unique opportunity" for us to seize.

But Kennan's more eloquent formulation remains the locus classicus here, and so I want to conclude by quoting it once more, in an updated form as applicable to World War IV as the original was to World War III:

> The thoughtful observer of Islamic terrorism will find no cause for complaint in its challenge to American society. He will rather experience a certain gratitude for a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

To which, surely, the only fitting response is a very loud and a very resonant amen.

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Too Many Immigrants?

Tamar Jacoby

OF ALL the issues Americans have had to rethink in the wake of September 11, few seem more baffling than immigration. As polls taken in the following weeks confirmed, the attacks dramatically heightened people's fear of foreigners—not just Muslim foreigners, all foreigners. In one survey, fully two-thirds of the respondents said they wanted to stop any immigration until the war against terror was over. In Congress, the once marginal Immigration Reform Caucus quadrupled in size virtually overnight, and a roster of sweeping new proposals came to the fore: a six-month moratorium on all visas, shutting the door to foreign students, even militarizing our borders with troops and tanks.

In the end, none of these ideas came close to getting through Congress. On the issue of security, Republicans and Democrats, law-enforcement professionals and civilians alike agreed early on that it was critical to distinguish terrorists from immigrants—and that it was possible to protect the country without isolating it.

The Bush administration and Congress soon came up with similar plans based on the idea that the best defense was to intercept unwanted visitors before they reached the U.S.—when they applied for visas in their home country, were preparing to board a plane, or were first packing a lethal cargo shipment. A bipartisan bill now making its way through Congress calls for better screening of visa applications, enhanced intelligence-sharing among federal agencies, new tamper-proof travel documents with biometric data, and better tracking of the few hundred thousand foreign students already in the U.S.

But the security debate is only one front in a broader struggle over immigration. There is no question that our present policy is defective, and immigration opponents are hoping that the attacks will precipitate an all-out fight about overhauling it. Yet even if the goal is only to secure our borders, Americans are up against some fairly intractable realities.

In the aftermath of September 11, for example, there have been calls for tracking not just foreign students but all foreigners already in the country. This is not an unreasonable idea; but it would be next to impossible to implement. Even monitoring the entry and exit of visitors, as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has been charged with doing, has turned out to be a logistical nightmare—we are talking about a *half-billion* entries and probably an equal number of exits a year. (Of the total, incidentally, by far the largest number are Canadian and Mexican daily commuters, a third are Americans, and only a tiny percentage—fewer than a million a year—are immigrants seeking to make a new life in the U.S.) If collecting this infor-

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mation is difficult, analyzing and acting on it are a distant dream. As for the foreign-born population as a whole, it now stands at 28 million and growing, with illegal aliens alone estimated at between seven and eight million. It would take years just to identify them, much less find a way to track them all.

To this, the more implacable immigration opponents respond that if we cannot keep track of those already here, we should simply deport them. At the very least, others say, we should move to reduce radically the number we admit from now on, or impose a five- or ten-year moratorium. In the months since September 11, a variety of more and less extreme restrictionists have come together in a loose coalition to push forward such ideas. Although the movement has so far made little headway in Washington, it has become increasingly vocal, gaining a wide audience for its views, and has found a forceful, nationally known spokesman in the former presidential candidate and best-selling author Patrick J. Buchanan.

THE COALITION itself is a motley assemblage of bedfellows: liberals worried about the impact of large-scale immigration on population growth and the environment, conservatives exercised about porous borders and the shattering of America's common culture, plus a sizable contingent of outright racial demagogues. The best known organization pushing for restriction is the Federation for Immigration Reform, or FAIR, which provided much of the intellectual ammunition for the last big anti-immigration campaign, in the mid-1990's.

FAIR is still the richest and most powerful of the restrictionist groups. In the months since the attacks, a consortium it leads has spent some $300,000 on inflammatory TV ads in Western states where the 2002 mid-term elections will bring immigration issues to the fore; over pictures of the nineteen hijackers, the spots argue that the only way to keep America safe is to reduce immigration severely. But FAIR no longer dominates the debate as it once did, and newer groups are springing up around it.

On one flank are grassroots cells. Scrappier and more populist than FAIR, some consist of no more than an individual with a web page or radio show who has managed to accumulate a regional following; other local organizations have amassed enough strength to influence the politics of their states, particularly in California. On the other flank, and at the national level, FAIR is increasingly being eclipsed by younger, more media-savvy groups like the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) in Washington and the writers associated with the website VDARE, both of which aim at swaying elite opinion in New York and Washington.

Different groups in the coalition focus on different issues, and each has its own style and way of presenting itself. One organization, Project USA, has devoted itself to putting up roadside billboards—nearly 100 so far, in a dozen states—with provocative messages like, "Tired of sitting in traffic? Every day, another 8,000 immigrants arrive. Every day!!" Those in the more respectable factions spend much energy distancing themselves from the more militant or fanatical, and even those with roughly the same mandate can seem, or sound, very different.

Consider CIS and VDARE. Created in 1985 as a fact-finding arm of FAIR, CIS is today arguably better known and more widely quoted than its parent. The group's executive director, Mark Krikorian, has made himself all but indispensable to anyone interested in immigration issues, sending out daily electronic compendiums of relevant news stories culled from the national press. His organization publishes scholarly papers on every aspect of the issue by a wide circle of respected academic researchers, many of whom would eschew any association with, say, FAIR's exclusionary politics. Along with his director of research, Steven Camarota, Krikorian is also a regular on Capitol Hill, where his restrained, informative testimony is influential with a broad array of elected officials.

VDARE, by contrast, wears its political views on its sleeve—and they are deliberately provocative. Founded a few years ago by the journalist Peter Brimelow, a senior editor at *Forbes* and the author of the best-selling *Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster* (1995), VDARE is named after Virginia Dare, "the first English child born in the New World." Kidnapped as an infant and never seen again, Virginia Dare is thought to have eventually married into a local Indian tribe, or to have been killed by it—almost equally unfortunate possibilities in the minds of VDARE's writers, who make no secret of their concern about the way America's original Anglo-Saxon stock is being transformed by immigration.

The overall strength of today's restrictionist movement is hard to gauge. But there is no question that recent developments—both September 11 and the flagging American economy—have significantly boosted its appeal. One Virginia-based organization, Numbers USA, claims that its membership grew from 5,000 to over 30,000 in the

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weeks after the attacks. Buchanan's *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization**—a deliberately confrontational jeremiad—shot to the top of Amazon.com's best-seller list within days of publication, then moved to a perch in the *New York Times* top ten. Nor does it hurt that the anti-immigrant cause boasts advocates at both ends of the political spectrum. Thus, leftists repelled by the likes of Buchanan and Brimelow could read a more congenial statement of the same case in a recent, much-discussed series in the *New York Review of Books* by the distinguished sociologist Christopher Jencks.

To be sure, immigration opponents have also had some significant setbacks. Most notably, the Republican party, which stood staunchly with them in the mid-1990's in California, is now firmly on the other side of the issue—if anything, George W. Bush has become the country's leading advocate for liberalizing immigration law. But there can be no mistaking the depth of public concern over one or another of the questions raised by the restrictionists, and in the event of more attacks or a prolonged downturn, their appeal could surely grow.

In addition to national security, immigration opponents offer arguments principally about three issues: natural resources, economics, and the likelihood that today's newcomers will be successfully absorbed into American society. On the first, restrictionists contend not only that immigrants compete with us and consume our natural resources, to the detriment of the native-born, but that their numbers will eventually overwhelm us, choking the United States to death both demographically and environmentally.

Much of Buchanan's book, for example, is devoted to a discussion of population. As he correctly notes, birth rates in Europe have dropped below replacement level, and populations there are aging. By 2050, he estimates, only 10 percent of the world's people will be of European descent, while Asia, Africa, and Latin America will grow by three to four billion people, yielding "30 to 40 new Mexicos." As the developed countries "die out," huge movements of hungry people from the underdeveloped world will swamp their territory and destroy their culture. "This is not a matter of prophecy," Buchanan asserts, "but of mathematics."

Extrapolating from similar statistics, Christopher Jencks has predicted that the U.S. population may double in size over the next half-century largely as a result of the influx of foreigners. (This is a much faster rate of growth than that foreseen by virtually any other mainstream social scientist.) Jencks imagines a hellish future in which American cities will become all but unlivable and suburban sprawl will decimate the landscape. The effect on our natural resources will be devastating, as the water supply dwindles and our output of carbon dioxide soars. (To put his arguments in perspective, Jencks finds nothing new in this pattern. Immigration has always been disastrous to our ecology, he writes: the Indians who crossed the Bering Strait 13,000 years ago depleted the continent's fauna by overhunting, and many centuries later the germs brought by Europeans laid waste to the Indians.)

Not all the arguments from scarcity are quite so apocalyptic, but all begin and end with the assumption that the size of the pie is fixed, and that continued immigration can only mean less and less for the rest of us. A similar premise underlies the restrictionists' second set of concerns—that immigrants steal jobs from native-born workers, depress Americans' wages, and make disproportionate use of welfare and other government services.

Here, groups like FAIR and CIS focus largely on the portion of the immigrant flow that is poor and ill-educated—not the Indian engineer in Silicon Valley, but the Mexican farmhand with a sixth-grade education. "Although immigrants comprise about 12 percent of America's workforce," CIS reports, "they account for 31 percent of high-school dropouts in the workforce." Not only are poverty rates among these immigrants higher than among the native-born, but, the restrictionists claim, the gap is growing. As for welfare, Krikorian points out that even in the wake of the 1996 reform that denied means-tested benefits to many immigrants, their reliance on some programs—food stamps, for example—still exceeds that of native-born Americans.

The restrictionists' favorite economist is Harvard's George Borjas, the author of a widely read 1999 book, *Heaven's Door*.† As it happens, Borjas did not confirm the worst fears about immigrants: they do not, for example, steal Americans' jobs, and today's newcomers are no poorer or less capable than those who came at the turn of the 20th century and ultimately did fine in America. Still, in Borjas's estimation, compared with the native-born of their era, today's immigrants are *relatively* farther behind than, say, the southern Europeans who came a century ago, and even if they do not actual-

* Dunne Books, 320 pp., $25.95.

† Reviewed by Irwin M. Stelzer in the September 1999 Commentary.

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ly take work away from Americans, they may prompt the native-born to move to other cities and thus adversely affect the larger labor market.

As a result, Borjas contends, the presence of these newcomers works to lower wages, particularly among high-school dropouts. And because of the cost of the government services they consume—whether welfare or public schooling or hospital care—they impose a fiscal drain on a number of states where they settle. In sum, immigrants may be a boon to U.S. business and to the middle class (which benefits from lower prices for the fruit the foreigners pick and from the cheap lawn services they provide), but they are an unfair burden on ordinary working Americans, who must subsidize them with higher taxes.

Borjas's claims have hardly gone unchallenged by economists on either the Right or the Left—including Jagdish Bhagwati in a heated exchange in the *Wall Street Journal*—but he remains a much-quoted figure among restrictionists, who particularly like his appealing-sounding note of concern for the native-born black poor. Borjas's book has also greatly strengthened those who propose that existing immigration policy, which is based mainly on the principle of family unification, be changed to one like Canada's that admits people based on the skills they bring.

This brings us to the third issue that worries the anti-immigration community: the apparent failure, or refusal, of large numbers of newcomers to assimilate successfully into American society, to learn our language, adopt our mores, and embrace American values as their own. To many who harp on this theme—Buchanan, the journalist Georgie Anne Geyer, the more polemical VDARE contributors—it is, frankly, the racial makeup of today's influx that is most troublesome. "Racial groups that are different are more difficult to assimilate," Buchanan says flatly, painting a nightmarish picture of newcomers with "no desire to learn English or become citizens." Buchanan and others make much of the influence of multiculturalism and identity politics in shaping the priorities of the immigrant community; his chapter on Mexican immigrants, entitled "La Reconquista," quotes extensively from extremist Chicano activists who want, he says, to "colonize" the United States.

On this point, it should be noted, Buchanan and his followers are hardly alone, and hardly original. Any number of observers who are *favorably* disposed to continued immigration have likewise raised an alarm over the radically divisive and balkanizing effects of multiculturalism and bilingual education. Where they part company with Buchanan is over the degree of danger they perceive—and what should be done about it.*

ABOUT ONE thing the restrictionists are surely right: our immigration policy is broken. Not only is the INS one of the least efficient and most beleaguered agencies in Washington—at the moment, four million authorized immigrants are waiting, some for a decade or more, for their paperwork to be processed—but official policy, particularly with regard to Mexico, is a hypocritical sham. Even as we claim to limit the flow of migrants, and force thousands to wait their turn for visas, we look the other way as hundreds of thousands enter the country without papers—illegal but welcomed by business as a cheap, pliable labor force. Nor do we have a clear rationale for the selection we end up making from the vast pool of foreigners eager to enter the country.

But here precisely is where the restrictionists' arguments are the least helpful. Take the issue of scarcity. The restrictionists construct their dire scenarios by extrapolating from the current flow of immigrants. But as anyone who follows these matters is aware, nothing is harder to predict than who and how many will come in the future. It is, for example, as easy today as it ever was to migrate to the U.S. from Puerto Rico, and wages on the island still lag woefully behind wages here. But the net flow from Puerto Rico stopped long ago, probably because life there improved just enough to change the calculus of hope that had been prodding people to make the trip.

Sooner or later, the same thing will happen in Mexico. No one knows when, but surely one hint of things to come is that population growth is slowing in Mexico, just as it slowed earlier here and in Europe. Over the past three decades, the Mexican fertility rate has dropped from an average 6.5 children per mother to a startling 2.5.

Nor are demographic facts themselves always as straightforward in their implications as the restrictionists assume. True, population is still growing faster in the underdeveloped world than in developed countries. But is this an argument against immigration, or for it? If they are to remain strong, countries *need* population—workers, customers, taxpayers, soldiers. And our own openness to immigrants, together with our proven ability to ab-

* In COMMENTARY, see, for example, Linda Chavez's "Our Hispanic Predicament" (June 1998) and "What To Do About Immigration" (March 1995), and my own "In Asian America" (July-August 2000).

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sorb them, is one of our greatest advantages over Japan and Europe, which face a demographic crisis as their ratio of workers to retirees adversely shifts. The demographer Ben Wattenberg has countered Buchanan with a simple calculation: "If we keep admitting immigrants at our current levels, there will be almost 400 million Americans by 2050. That"—and only that, one might add—"can keep us strong enough to defend and perhaps extend our views and values."

The argument from economics is equally unhelpful. The most commonly heard complaint about foreign workers is that they take jobs from Americans. Not only is this assertion untrue—nobody has found real evidence to support it—but cities and states with the largest immigrant populations (New York, Los Angeles, and others) boast far faster economic growth and lower unemployment than cities and states that do not attract immigrants. In many places, the presence of immigrants seems to reduce unemployment even among native-born blacks—probably because of the way immigrants stimulate economic growth.

Economists looking for a depressive effect on native-born wages have been nearly as disappointed: dozens of studies over the past two or three decades have found at most modest and probably temporary effects. Even if Borjas is right that a native-born black worker may take home $300 less a year as a result of immigration, this is a fairly small amount of money in the overall scheme of things. More to the point, globalization would have much the same effect on wages, immigrants or no immigrants. Pressed by competition from foreign imports, American manufacturers have had to change production methods and cut costs, including labor costs. If they did not, they would have to go out of business—or move to an underdeveloped country where wages are lower. In either case, the U.S. economy would end up being hurt far more than by the presence of immigrant workers—who expand the U.S. economic pie when they buy shoes and groceries and washing machines from their American neighbors and call American plumbers into their homes.

What about the costs imposed by immigrants, especially by their use of government services? It is true that many immigrants—though far from all—are poorer than native-born Americans, and thus pay less in taxes. It is also true that one small egment of the immigrant population—refugees—ends to be heavily dependent on welfare. As a result, ates with large immigrant populations often face chronic fiscal problems.

But that is at the state level, and mostly in high-welfare states like California. If we shift the lens to the federal level, and include the taxes that immigrants remit to the IRS, the calculation comes out very differently: immigrants pay in more than they take out. This is particularly true if one looks at the picture over the course of an immigrant's lifetime. Most come to the U.S. as young adults looking for work—which means they were already educated at home, relieving us of a significant cost. More important, even illegal immigrants generally keep up with payroll taxes, contributing to Social Security though they may never claim benefits. According to Stephen Moore, an economist at the Cato Institute, foreign-born workers are likely to contribute as much as $2 trillion to Social Security over the next 70 years, thus effectively keeping it afloat.

The economic debate often comes down to this sort of war of numbers, but the victories on either side are rarely conclusive. After all, even 28 million immigrants form but a small part of the $12-trillion U.S. economy, and most of the fiscal costs and benefits associated with them are relatively modest. Besides, fiscal calculations are only a small part of the larger economic picture. How do we measure the energy immigrants bring—the pluck and grit and willingness to improvise and innovate?

Not only are immigrants by and large harder-working than the native-born, they generally fill economic niches that would otherwise go wanting. The term economists use for this is "complementarity." If immigrants were exactly like American workers, they would not be particularly valuable to employers. They are needed precisely because they are different: willing or able to do jobs few American workers are willing or able to do. These jobs tend to be either at the lowest rungs of the employment ladder (busboy, chambermaid, line worker in a meatpacking plant) or at the top (nurse, engineer, information-technology worker).

It is no accident that 80 percent of American farmworkers are foreign-born, or that, if there were no immigrants, hotels and restaurants in many cities would have to close their doors. Nor is it an accident that immigrants account for a third of the scientific workforce in Silicon Valley, or that Asian entrepreneurs run a quarter of the companies there. Today's supply of willing laborers from Mexico, China, India, and elsewhere matches our demand in these various sectors, and the result is good for just about everyone—business, workers, and American consumers alike.

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To be sure, what is good for business, or even for American consumers, may not ultimately be good for the United States—and this is where the issue of assimilation comes in. "What is a nation?" Buchanan asks. "Is America nothing more than an economic system?" If immigrants do not come to share our values, adopt our heroes, and learn our history as their own, ultimately the nation will not hold. Immigration policy cannot be a suicide pact.

The good news is that assimilation is not going nearly as badly as the restrictionists claim. Though many immigrants start out at the bottom, most eventually join the working poor, if not the middle class. And by the time they have been here twenty years, they generally do as well as or better than the native-born, earning comparable salaries and registering *lower* poverty rates.

Nor is it true that immigrants fail or refuse to learn English. Many more than in previous eras come with a working knowledge of the language—it is hard to avoid it in the world today. Despite the charade that is bilingual education, nearly all high-school students who have been educated in this country—nine out of ten of them, according to one study—prefer English to their native tongue. And by the third generation, even among Hispanics, who are somewhat slower than other immigrants to make the linguistic shift, only 1 percent say they use "more or only Spanish" at home.

Despite the handicaps with which many arrive, the immigrant drive to succeed is as strong as ever. According to one important study of the second generation, newcomers' children work harder than their U.S. classmates, putting in an average of two hours of homework a night compared with the "normal" 30 minutes. They also aspire to higher levels of educational achievement, earn better grades, drop out less frequently—and expect only the best of their new homeland. Nearly two-thirds believe that hard work and accomplishment can triumph over prejudice, and about the same number say there is no better country than the United States. As for the lure of identity politics, one of the most thorough surveys of Hispanics, conducted in 1999 by the *Washington Post*, reported that 84 percent believe it is "important" or "very important" for immigrants "to change so that they blend into the larger society, as in the idea of the melting pot."

There is also bad news. Immigrant America is far from monolithic, and some groups do worse than others both economically and culturally. While fewer than 5 percent of Asian young people use an Asian language with their friends, nearly 45 percent of Latinos sometimes use Spanish. Close to 90 percent of Chinese parents expect their children to finish college; only 55 percent of Mexicans do. Indeed, Mexicans—who account for about a quarter of the foreign-born—lag behind on many measures, including, most worrisomely, education. The average Mexican migrant comes with less than eight years of schooling, and though the second generation is outstripping its parents, it too falls well below American norms, either for other immigrants or for the native-born.

When it comes to absorbing the American common culture, or what has been called patriotic assimilation, there is no question that today's immigrants are at a disadvantage compared with yesterday's. Many Americans themselves no longer know what it means to be American. Our schools teach, at best, a travesty of American history, distorted by political correctness and the excesses of multiculturalism. Popular culture supplies only the crudest, tinniest visions of our national heritage. Even in the wake of September 11, few leaders have tried to evoke more than a fuzzy, feel-good enthusiasm for America. No wonder many immigrants have a hard time making the leap from their culture to ours. We no longer ask it of them.

Still, even if the restrictionists are right about all this, their remedy is unworkable. Given the global economy, given the realities of politics and law enforcement in the United States, we are not going to stop—or significantly reduce—the flow of immigrant workers into the country any time soon. Businesses that rely on imported labor would not stomach it; as it is, they object vociferously whenever the INS tries to enforce the law. Nor are American citizens prepared to live with the kinds of draconian measures that would be needed to implement a significant cutback or time-out. Even in the wake of the attacks, there is little will to require that immigrants carry ID cards, let alone to erect the equivalent of a Berlin Wall along the Rio Grande. In sum, if many immigrants among us are failing to adopt our common culture, we will have to look elsewhere than to the restrictionists for a solution.

What, then, is to be done? As things stand today, American immigration policy and American law are perilously out of sync with reality—the reality of the market. Consider the Mexican case, not the only telling one but the most dramatic.

People born in Mexico now account for roughly 10 percent of the U.S. workforce, and the market

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for their labor is a highly efficient one. Very few recent Mexican migrants are unemployed; even modest economic upturns or downturns have a perceptible impact on the number trying to enter illegally, as word quickly spreads from workers in California or Kansas back to home villages in Mexico. This precise coordination of supply and demand has been drawing roughly 300,000 Mexicans over the border each year, although, even including minors and elderly parents, the INS officially admits only half that many.

One does not have to be a free-market enthusiast to find this discrepancy absurd, and worse. Not only does it criminalize badly needed laborers and productive economic activity. It also makes an ass of the law and insidiously corrupts American values, encouraging illegal hiring and discrimination against even lawful Mexican migrants.

Neither a moratorium nor a reduction in official quotas would eliminate this thriving labor exchange—on the contrary, it would only exacerbate the mismatch. Instead, we should move in the opposite direction from what the restrictionists demand, bringing the number we admit more into line with the reality of the market. The rationale for whom we ought to let in, what we should encourage and reward, is work.

This, as it happens, is precisely the direction in which President Bush was moving before September 11. A package of reforms he floated in July, arrived at in negotiations with Mexican president Vicente Fox, would have significantly expanded the number of visas for Mexican workers. The President's impulse may have been partisan—to woo Latino voters—but he stumbled onto the basis for an immigration policy that would at once serve America's interests and reflect its values. He put the core idea plainly, and got it exactly right: "If somebody is willing to offer a job others in America aren't willing to do, we ought to welcome that person to the country."

Compared with this, any other criterion for immigration policy—family reunification, country of origin, or skill level—sinks into irrelevancy. It makes no sense at all that three-quarters of the permanent visas available today should be based on family ties, while only one-quarter are employment-related. As for the Canadian-style notion of making skill the decisive factor, admitting engineers and college professors but closing the door to farmworkers, not only does this smack of a very un-American elitism but it disregards our all too palpable economic needs at the low end of the labor market.

The problem is that there is at present virtually no legal path into the U.S. for unskilled migrant laborers; unless they have relatives here, they have no choice but to come illicitly. If we accept the President's idea that immigration policy should be based on work, we ought to enshrine it in a program that makes it possible for those who want to work, and who can find a job, to come lawfully. The program ought to be big enough to meet market needs: the number of visas available the first year should match the number of people who now sneak in against the law, and in future years it should follow the natural rise and fall of supply and demand. At the same time, the new regime ought to be accompanied by serious enforcement measures to ensure that workers use this pipeline rather than continuing to come illegally outside it.

Such a policy makes sound economic sense—and also would provide a huge boost for immigrant absorption and assimilation. By definition, the undocumented are effectively barred from assimilating. Most cannot drive legally in the U.S., or, in many states, get regular care in a hospital. Nor, in most places, can they send their children to college. An indelible caste line separates them from other Americans—no matter how long they stay, how much they contribute, or how ardently they and their children strive to assimilate. If we want newcomers to belong, we should admit them legally, and find a fair means of regularizing the status of those who are already here illicitly.

But rerouting the illegal flow into legal channels will not by itself guarantee assimilation—particularly not if, as the President and Congress have suggested, we insist that workers go home when the job is done. In keeping with the traditional Republican approach to immigration, the President's reform package included a proposal for a guest-worker program, and before September 11, both Democrats and Republicans had endorsed the idea. If we want to encourage assimilation, however, such a system would only be counterproductive.

The cautionary model in this case is Germany, which for years admitted unskilled foreigners exclusively as temporary guest workers, holding out virtually no hope that either they or their children could become German citizens. As it happened, many of these migrants remained in Germany long after the work they were imported for had disappeared. But today, nearly 40 years later, most of them still have not assimilated, and they remain, poorly educated and widely despised, on the mar-

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gins of German society. Clearly, if what we hope to encourage is the putting-down of roots, any new visa program must give participants a shot at membership in the American body politic.

But how we hand out visas is only the first step in a policy aimed at encouraging immigrant absorption. Other steps would have to include the provision of basic services like instruction in English, civics classes, naturalization programs—and also counseling in more practical matters like how to navigate the American banking system. (Many newcomers, even when they start making money, are at sea in the world of credit cards, credit histories, mortgage applications, and the like.) All these nuts-and-bolts services are as essential as the larger tasks, from overhauling the teaching of American history to eliminating counterproductive programs like bilingual education and ethnic entitlements that only breed separatism and alienation.

THERE CAN be no gainsaying the risks America runs in remaining open to new immigrants. The security perils, though real enough, are the least worrisome. Legalizing the flow of needed workers and providing them with papers will help keep track of who is here and also help prevent those who wish to do us harm from entering in the first place. The more daring, long-term gamble lies in continuing to admit millions of foreigners who may or may not make it here or find a way to fit in. This is, as Buchanan rightly states, "a decision we can never undo."

Still, it is an experiment we have tried before—repeatedly. The result has never come out exactly as predicted, and the process has always been a wrenching one. But as experiments go, it has not only succeeded on its own terms; it has made us the wonder of the world. It can do so again—but only if we stop denying reality and resolve instead to meet the challenge head-on.

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Remembering Robert Warshow

Midge Decter

In only a few years it will be a half-century since the death of Robert Warshow, a writer and critic of enormous grace and power who also served for some eight years as the managing editor of this magazine. Warshow died, shockingly, at the age of thirty-seven, leaving behind what has always seemed, to the small but passionate circle of his admirers, a too scanty volume of his collected essays and reviews.

That volume, for which Warshow had signed a contract before he died and to which he himself had given the title *The Immediate Experience*, was first published in 1962, some seven years after his death. As might have been expected of a first book by a writer so young and already so long gone, it received little of the attention it deserved. Instead, it remained a kind of private feast, greedily consumed by the members of what might be called the Robert Warshow cult. But now Harvard has at long last reissued the book, adding eight short pieces that for some mysterious reason had been omitted from the original.* Like the original, the reissue also contains Warshow's own "preface" (written as an application for a Guggenheim grant) and a posthumous tribute by Lionel Trilling; these two essays have been supplemented with a fine appreciation of Warshow by the *New Yorker* film critic David Denby and a moving though curious epilogue by the philosopher Stanley Cavell. (Not the least curious aspect of the latter piece is Cavell's finding of a likeness between Warshow and the German-Jewish critic Walter Benjamin, whom, had he known his work, Warshow would surely have despised.)

As in the original, the writings are grouped under headings—"American Popular Culture," "American Movies," "Charles Chaplin," and "The Art Film"—with the new, final category, "Previously Uncollected Essays," at the end. This means that the book concludes, unfortunately, with some of Warshow's shortest and least important reviews. Though it would have done violence to the original scheme, readers would have been better served by a chronological arrangement enabling them to follow his work through the passage of time and thus relate what he was thinking and writing to what was going on in the world around him. This would have been more revelatory of what Warshow was up to, how far he had gone, and how very much he achieved in such brief compass.

Be that as it may, to read these pieces in any order whatsoever is to come into contact with a unique mind. Warshow wrote about literature, politics, art films, comic strips, the Jews, the theater, and, of course, American movies—the subject for which he is probably best remembered by many of his readers. To all these subjects he brought a sensibility that was in its own way extremely tough, at

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the same time most forgiving, and unblinkingly open to a very broad variety of human possibilities.

In the course of his appreciation, David Denby remarks that Warshow could never have been a regular movie reviewer. He is right, though not for any of the reasons he cites: namely, that Warshow "lacked spontaneity or gaiety," or "that praise did not come easily to him," or "that he did not seek out new talent." For those listening intently to the music of the prose, there is gaiety and praise aplenty to be discerned in these essays; and as for seeking out new talent, it is questionable how far a reviewer can go in that direction without making himself foolish.* The real reason Warshow could never have been a regular reviewer is that he did not want to appraise movies, he wanted to *understand* them, which in turn required understanding himself—and, through himself, the rest of us—in relation to them. This is hardly an undertaking that one concludes with a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down. (Denby himself does much more than this as a regular reviewer, but inevitably it is part of his job.)

WARSHOW WAS in any case less a reviewer than what must be called, for lack of a more graceful term, a cultural critic. Within the community of which he was a member—nowadays identified simply as "the New York intellectuals"—a cultural critic was someone who hoped to gain insight into an aspect of the world, past, present, or future, through whatever piece of work happened at the time to be the object of his scrutiny. The fact, however, that Warshow included *movies* among the works to be so treated was still very rare at the time he was writing.

Not that the movies were being scanted. Every newspaper boasted at least one reviewer who wrote daily or almost daily, serving essentially as a consumer guide. During the late 1940's and 1950's, moreover, particularly among sociologists, there had come into vogue a new field known as "mass culture," in which movies inevitably occupied a major place (television was then still a medium in the process of becoming). Just as inevitably, discussion of the movies in these circles floated off into the jargon-filled air of social theory where "serious" people could contemplate their significance with all due solemnity. Of actual movie *critics* there were in those days perhaps three, and of these Warshow was by far the most graceful and the most penetrating.

One of the factors accounting for these qualities of grace and penetration was his refusal to hold himself above or distant from what he was watching. "A man goes to the movies," he famously remarked in his Guggenheim application, "and the critic must acknowledge that he is that man." This "acknowledgment" was to result in a handful of essays that are perhaps even more illuminating today than they were when first written. They illuminate the films in question, and they illuminate the unspoken responses to these films of their audiences—which is to say, us.

Warshow was especially attentive to certain archetypal figures and their inner meaning for moviegoers. Here he is, for example, on the Western gunslinger:

> No matter what he has done, [the gunslinger] *looks* right, and he remains invulnerable because, without acknowledging anyone else's right to judge him, he has judged his own failure and has already assimilated it, understanding—as no one else understands except the marshal and the barroom girl—that he can do nothing but play out the drama of the gun fight again and again until the time comes when it will be he who gets killed.

And here he dissects our absorption with the fate of celluloid gangsters:

> The gangster is the man of the city, with the city's language and knowledge, with its queer and dishonest skills and its terrible daring, carrying his life in his hands like a placard, like a club. . . . [F]or the gangster there is only the city; he must inhabit it in order to personify it: not the real city, but that dangerous and sad city of the imagination which is so much more important, which is the modern world. . . . The real city, one might say, produces only criminals; the imaginary city produces the gangster: he is what we want to be and what we are afraid we may become.

And here he is (taking off from Calvero in Chaplin's *Limelight*) on why we respond (or, in my own case, fail to respond) to clowns:

> With whatever deliberation he may contrive his effects, in the end the clown must submit *personally* to humiliation, receiving a custard pie in his own face, falling on his own behind. . . . Every clown no doubt dreams that because he has practiced the fall in advance it will not truly touch him, his essential being will remain upright: this is the source of that "tragedy" of a

* Pauline Kael, who could write wonderfully about the movies and who clearly learned a good deal from Warshow, failed this test on more than one occasion.

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clown's life that we have heard so much about. But if he is a true clown, then his essential being is precisely what consents to the fall, and we who refuse to separate him from his role are more right than he is.

Warshow had other subjects besides the movies; about them all he wrote in the same voice and with the same qualities of grace and penetration: about books and plays—he was a surprising but convincing admirer of Clifford Odets's *Awake and Sing*—about the *New Yorker* magazine, even about a comic strip called *Krazy Kat*. Beyond their deep readings of individual works, some of these essays—particularly "The Legacy of the 30's" (1946) and "The Movie Camera and the American" (1952)—tell us a great deal if not everything about the liberal culture of the early postwar period, the culture out of which would sprout so much of what later, in the 1960's and 70's, came to trouble our domestic tranquility (of this more below). Two of his most memorable essays are personal, and each of them is indicative of a certain uncharacteristic private disturbance, but neither betrays even the slightest change of voice: "An Old Man Gone" (1951), which is about the death, funeral, and cremation of his father, and "Paul, the Horror Comics, and Dr. Wertham" (1954), which describes his twin struggle with his then-eleven-year-old son over the latter's passion for grisly comic books and with himself over the "experts" who wished to censor such things.

In both of these pieces, Warshow presents himself as someone battling the characteristic inadequacies of an enlightened modern man. He sees his father in his coffin and cannot keep himself from indecorous thoughts—about the coffin, about his father's body, about the scent of the flowers in the room and the process of embalming; about his father's disappointments and guilt; about the "half brutality and half self-pity" of the old man's declaration before he died that his ashes should be thrown into a garbage can. As for comic books, Warshow naturally dislikes them on grounds of taste and prefers that his son stop reading them—and yet, he reports, Paul wins the argument. He wins because the father cannot really see that they are having any noticeable ill effect, and besides, "Children do need some 'sinful' world of their own to which they can retreat from the demands of the adult world; as we sweep away one juvenile dung heap, they will move on to another." What he would really like, Warshow admits, pinpointing the helplessness of every kindly and enlightened parent in the world, is for the authorities—be they psychiatrists like Dr. Frederic Wertham or politicians like Senator Estes Kefauver, who had convened a committee to investigate the links between reading comic books and juvenile delinquency—to "find some way to make it impossible for Paul to get any comic books. But I'd rather Paul didn't get the idea that I had anything to do with it."

In other words, a man analyzes the culture and society in which he lives, and the analyst, armed with the toughest and fairest of minds, along with the most elegantly supple of sensibilities, never fails to acknowledge that he is that man.

Nor did all this remain merely on the page. I first met Robert Warshow—or, I should say, took notice of him, for I do not believe we were introduced—at a large and crowded party some time in early 1948. I was standing at the outer edge of a circle that had gathered around him, and he was holding forth rather sternly about the shortcomings of *Open City*, a film that had recently introduced Americans to the Italian director Roberto Rossellini and that would run in a theater near Times Square, to a great deal of pious acclaim, for what seemed like years.

I no longer remember the indictment Warshow was bringing against the movie and its director. But at some point, to my amazement, he used the word "garbage" to characterize not so much the movie itself as Rossellini's meretricious and flashily dismal exploitation of the sights and streets of wartime Rome.

To understand my shock at what I was hearing, it is necessary to know something about the activity of moviegoing in New York City for a then-recent arrival like me—namely, someone in a headlong rush to overcome the effects of what I had come to think of as a culturally poverty-stricken youth. Having as a young Midwestern girl swooned at my first sight of Frank Sinatra on the silver screen, having thrilled to Henry Fonda on horseback, I was now required by my big-city acquaintances to put away childish things. In particular, I was told, I could never be properly conversant with the great world unless I learned a good deal about foreign films (which in those days meant films made in France or Italy or Germany). And this, in a spirit of deepest apology, I was then in the process of doing.

Today, international movies can be seen on any trip to the local cineplex, but at the time, even in New York, there was only a handful of tiny, fly-blown theaters—if memory serves, two in Green-

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wich Village, one in Times Square, and one on the Upper West Side—and many was the evening I had been making a pilgrimage to one or the other of them. And yet here was Robert Warshow, about whom at that point I knew very little other than that he was a highbrow who wrote critical essays and served as the managing editor of a new intellectual Jewish magazine called COMMENTARY, and this Warshow was issuing an indictment against a movie that I had sat through no fewer than three times, hoping—in vain—to feel its power over me!

Later, when I knew Bob Warshow much better, I heard him complain once about the demands for high-flying sexual performance that had come to be so relentlessly imposed on American men. "You no sooner learn that you're supposed to keep your pants up," he said, "than they tell you that you have to take them down again." The experience of listening to him on that evening in 1948 was a bit like that: no sooner had I learned to regard all things European as bearing the stamp of a higher degree of cultivation than someone was telling me, on the contrary, to trust my own responses. As advice, this was astonishing, humbling, and liberating all at once.

Within a year, as the result of a series of happy coincidences, I would find myself working for Bob Warshow as his secretary, and in time we were to become good friends. But I would never quite get over feeling some combination of astonished, humbled, and liberated in his company. Reading him, being in his company on the page, only intensified the feeling—and continues to do so to this day.

I was not what could be called a good secretary. My typing was at best rather slow and primitive, and, being untrained, I had had to devise my own system—a novel one, if I say so myself—of stenography. But no boss has ever been more admired by his minions. Fortunately for me, if perhaps not so fortunately for him, his own role as managing editor called less for speed and efficiency in others than for a couple of qualities of personality with which he himself was highly endowed (or had willed himself to be endowed). These were the capacity to remain calm, and the ability to overlook.

COMMENTARY IN those days, while a unique and distinguished enterprise, was seldom a cheerful one, either for its editors or for a goodly number of its contributors. The main drive and directing imagination came from the magazine's founding editor Elliot Cohen, and Cohen was, to put it mildly, someone far from at ease in Zion. At COMMENTARY, which had been established right after the end of World War II, he sought to give expression to a new kind of unillusioned liberalism, one that would be properly appreciative of American life and friendly to American needs and purposes. At the same time, he intended the magazine to encourage or perhaps inspire some new post-Holocaust synthesis of Jewish thought. As responses to the magazine indicated, this dual ambition clearly reflected a real cultural current, both in the Jewish community and beyond.

The problem was that, being himself unable to write with anything like sustained coherence, but also unable to overcome resistance on the part of his writers to the precise letter of his will, Cohen labored permanently (and ultimately grew fatally ill) under the shadow of a quite unmanageable degree of frustration. The heavy air of irritable discontent this laid upon the process of getting out the magazine had sooner or later caused certain of the most gifted members of the staff to head for sunnier climes.

Warshow, however, stayed on, and succeeded now and then at giving the enterprise an appearance of being more or less on an even keel. Indeed, though the two men were not what you could call close, and though neither of them may have been aware of it, Warshow's role in Elliot Cohen's working life turned out to be essential: once Warshow was gone, Cohen found it increasingly impossible to function.

The office in those days consisted of half of a loft on the top floor of a small building in Manhattan's Garment District, complete with hot- and cold-leaking skylight and no air conditioning. In tribute to his superior rank, Cohen occupied a corner office that boasted two windows, through which now and then a bit of air might circulate. The other editors worked two to a cubicle with a single, basically useless, window between them. We secretaries sat near, or directly under, the skylight. Sometimes in summer the editors found it necessary to decamp to a nearby air-conditioned bar in order to meet the magazine's deadline.

In other words, COMMENTARY, itself then so young, had been established in conditions that were basically suitable only for the young. And Warshow's desk, plus whatever other space he could squeeze out of the office he shared with Clement Greenberg (whose job at COMMENTARY was in essence a sinecure and did not seem to involve spending a great deal of time in the office), bore testimony to this fact, serving as a kind of magnet for the magazine's younger contributors and would-be contributors. They could often be seen hanging around in order to be granted some instruction and/or encouragement—along with,

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should they be deemed worthy and should he have time, a certain amount of classy entertainment in the form of high literary conversation.

In this regard, Warshow was endlessly—sometimes, in his own view, uncontrollably—generous. If he could only learn to keep his mouth shut, he would sometimes jokingly complain, he might not then end up so frequently having to cite his own ideas from the work of others who had appropriated them. His even temper did sometimes fail him—as I, his so much less than perfect secretary, can testify. But like his generosity, his anger was generally of the kind that tended to boomerang. To their shock and grief, his friends would all too soon discover that it had taken its toll primarily on himself.

So, too, with his exacting spirit. If as an editor he tended to be gently instructive with others, as a writer he was almost helplessly demanding of himself. He wrote in pencil on a lined yellow pad attached to a clipboard that rested on his knee, a method that even back then had come to seem arcane. He composed, and edited, each sentence in his head before committing it to paper, and never to my knowledge did a finished Warshow manuscript give evidence of so much as a single word having been either inserted or crossed out.

This is also how his work struck, and still strikes, his readers. As Lionel Trilling put it:

> [Warshow's] is a method which is beyond my practical comprehension, but I can see that it might help to account for the way the prose moves, with a deliberate energy, a spirited gravity, refusing to be hurried as it makes its patient qualifications and witty distinctions, yet always pressing forward and taking us securely with it.

For one who spent so much of his working day cleaning up after the intellectual and verbal sloppiness of others, all this bespoke an almost cruelly demanding consciousness. Whether he experienced this consciousness as an injustice I cannot say, but there was an injustice of another kind, imposed from without, that to this day is as incomprehensible to me as it must, deep down, have been to him. This was the failure of many, if not most, of the editors who published him to value what he presented to them at its true worth.

Professional courtesy required that, as a member of the staff of Commentary, he first submit anything he had written to Elliot Cohen—unless, of course, it had been specifically commissioned by others. But rather than greedily clutching at these offerings, Cohen allowed a number of Warshow's classic pieces, ones for which in later years he would be best remembered, to slip away to *Partisan Review*. True, some of these essays did not fall within Commentary's main areas of concern; but it is difficult to understand how *any* editor of a magazine with literary standards would not have given his eye teeth to publish them. (I was witness to one of these Commentary rejections, of "An Old Man Gone"—turned down, in a bewildering failure of taste and judgment, on the grounds that it was somehow "embarrassing.") Nor was there much evidence that the editors of *Partisan Review*, the main beneficiaries of Elliot Cohen's unfathomable editorial stiffness, felt any special enthusiasm about publishing him. If they did, they were certainly discreet about it, at least within his earshot.

He once made a very good joke about all this, as he was often wont to do about things that hurt or disturbed him. "Why don't people understand," he said, "that it is just as hard work to be a minor writer as a major one?"

He died quite suddenly, of a troublesome and too long unrecognized heart condition. Aside from many inconsolable colleagues, friends, and admirers, he left behind a desperately sick wife, who died not long after him, and his young son Paul, the chief delight (and anxiety) of his life. He had been thinking of taking his first trip to Europe, and he was a good deal of the way through what he intended to be a long study of the film classics of the Russian Revolution, published after his death under the title "Re-Viewing the Russian Movies."

This piece did appear in Commentary, though not without some turmoil that by itself may account for the fact that it took his two literary executors, both of whom were editors at the magazine, more than five years to put together the material for the original publication of *The Immediate Experience*. The source of the turmoil was a passage near the beginning of this essay in which Warshow remarks that, fifteen years having elapsed since he had last seen these movies, he had gone to see them again, "this time looking very consciously for the pathos and irony of that enormous historical failure which now weighs so dangerously on us all."

The enormous historical failure was of course the disaster that was Communism, and the irony was easy to find: "Only to see the word 'comrades' or the word 'workers' in a subtitle was enough." And then came the sentence that sent at least one of his fellow editors into a fierce sweat:

> I would have given up all ironies, and the sense of tragedy and the sense of history along with

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them, just to have stupid, handsome [Czar] Nicholas grinding his heel once more into the face of unhappy Russia.

Now, anyone in or near the precincts of COMMENTARY would have known in blazing detail the horrors wreaked upon the Russian people through the good offices of Lenin, Stalin, and the bureaucrats of the Soviet Union, from the highest to the lowest. By 1955, indeed, no one in the United States who was not a member of the Communist Party USA and who permitted himself to be honest could have been in any doubt on this score. But it was one thing, if consequential enough, to be both a certified New York intellectual and an anti-Communist; it was another and much nervier and more consequential thing to long in print for a restoration of the Romanovs.

Besides, if even the czar was better than the Communists, would it not be necessary to find even greater—if not, indeed, the greatest—virtue in the political reality of the United States, despite the fact that it had only lately been released from the heel of Joseph McCarthy? There were many people at that time—they would truly come into their own within a decade of Warshow's death—for whom even a hint that their own country might be superior to any other, in any way, violated their deepest sense of political virtue. It was for fear of such people, perhaps, that discomfort about this particular Warshow essay had been expressed by one of the editors to whom it had been submitted.

WHICH BRINGS us at last to the subject of cultural politics, a subject that evidently still agitates at least some of Warshow's readers. "Shoot before you see the whites of their eyes," he once said in characterizing the polemical method of the socialist critic Irving Howe, who had just published a piece in *Partisan Review* accusing a number of his fellow intellectuals of having sold out to capitalist America. The same—shooting before you see the whites of their eyes—might be said not only of Warshow's present-day critics but even of some who have undertaken to defend him.

The main issue appears to involve not what he wrote about Russian films but rather his 1953 review of a volume of letters by Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, composed while the pair were in prison awaiting execution for treason. In a recent column on the back page of the *New York Times Book Review*, Judith Shulevitz has retrospectively charged Warshow with callous indifference to the Rosenbergs' suffering—she calls the essay an "amazingly nasty critique." His defenders, David Denby among them, have maintained that, on the contrary, he expresses true sympathy for the pair. But neither the criticism nor the defense is relevant to what the essay in question, "The 'Idealism' of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg," is actually about—namely, the destruction of the capacity to think and speak simply from the heart that was the direct consequence of the Rosenbergs' (and not just the Rosenbergs') lifelong commitment to the Communist cause.

The reason that Warshow's critics and even some of his defenders have failed to get the point of this essay may be that Communism, and hence the peculiar amalgam of false righteous sentiment and almost blind dishonesty that characterize the Communist sensibility, no longer seem either politically or culturally pertinent. But you cannot really grasp the history of the past half-century in this country if you fail, or refuse, to understand the role of Communism—actually the term ought to be Stalinism—or of anti-Communism (or anti-Stalinism) in the formation of attitudes toward American society among the educated classes.

This is not merely a matter of the debate over Soviet-style socialism versus American capitalism, or Soviet power versus American power, or even, as it is mostly remembered today, loyalty versus disloyalty to the United States government. Although each of these played a part, the most pernicious influence of Stalinism—evidenced in the willingness of so many intellectually significant people to march behind its shibboleths—lay in its effect on the country's cultural life. That effect, briefly put, was to hang a kind of curtain between what people were actually experiencing and the terms in which they were permitted to describe, and hence honestly to confront, that experience. "The most important effect of the intellectual life of the 1930's and the culture that grew out of it," Warshow wrote in describing the influence of Stalinism in "The Legacy of the 30's," "has been to distort and eventually to destroy the emotional and moral content of experience, putting in its place a system of conventionalized 'responses.'"

Crucial here was the role played by the pervasive atmosphere surrounding the Communist movement. This was not a matter of the "party line." While the ever diminishing band of actual party members toed whatever that line was at the moment and thus viewed the world, as it were, from party congress to party congress, many, many others—those who merely wished to be bathed in the movement's progressive light—found it sufficient to invoke words like "idealism," or "peace," or "humanitarianism" in order to identify themselves to themselves and to

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others as being on the right side, morally speaking, of history. Even though Communism has happily been dead for quite some time now, much of this particular inheritance remains ingrained.

It could be seen not so long ago in the denial practiced by parents of countercultural "kids" of the 1960's and 1970's who were pleased to take their children's claim of superior virtue at face value. It can be seen today in the willed passion with which many people talk about men who have contracted AIDS as if they had been made ill by society's unwarranted disapproval of their "lifestyle" rather than by what they had chosen as individuals to do. And it is there in the refusal or inability to understand what Robert Warshow was getting at when he wrote about Julius and Ethel Rosenberg that "something better" was required of them in writing to their sons than trying to "prepare" them for their deaths as one might prepare children "for having their tonsils taken out."

That something, he suggested, would have been an attempt at "unique inspiration"—that is, an attempt to explain and justify and pass on their commitment to Communism. Better yet, it would have been an attempt to tell the truth about what they had done as spies for the Soviet Union, and why they believed they were right to do it. But all that would have required of them precisely the thing they could not do. As Warshow wrote in a crucial passage:

> [W]e cannot blame the Rosenbergs for their failure to achieve an inspiration, and the commitment for which they died—and by which, we must assume, they somehow fulfilled themselves—was precisely that *the truth was not to be spoken* [emphasis added]. Not spoken, not whispered, not approached in the merest hint.

It may be that those who find this discussion heartless are actually bothered by Warshow's assumption that the Rosenbergs were in fact guilty. But virtually everyone now concedes they were in fact guilty, and that those like Warshow who were convinced of their guilt had been right all along. So perhaps in the end the curtain between actual experience and the description of experience remains in place: it is simply not "nice" to discuss such matters at all, just as it is not "nice" to remind ourselves that, when all is said and done, it would have been better for the Russian people, far better, to go on suffering under stupid, handsome Nicholas than to undergo the great proletarian revolution and all its cancerous fruits. Infinitely better for the rest of the world as well.

These issues were urgent when Warshow wrote—to repeat, less for their political than for their cultural ramifications. To judge from the tone of the objections to what he had to say, they remain urgent today.

Had he lived, he would have been eighty-five by now. What would he have made of the radicalism of the 1960's and 1970's with its barbarian yawp? For that matter, how would he have reacted to the turn toward some variety of conservatism that played so great a cultural role in the 1980's and thereafter? Whatever his response, it would not have been a simple one. It is certain, moreover, that he would have been fully alive to the gorgeous technological advances in filmmaking; and to the relentless beat of television, whose insistently synthetic vision of American life would surely have driven him to distraction and for that very reason compelled his careful attention. And what great prose might have resulted from his response to today's youth culture, with its adopted primitive décor, its relentlessly high volume, its air of half-educated knowingness?

Unlike many of his fellow literary and artistic highbrows of the 1950's, Warshow never defined himself by a disdain for the "unworthy." Unlike so many of today's literary and artistic intellectuals, he also never sought to merge with it. There was and there remains no voice in the land quite like his for sounding the notes of a truly alive and truly humane civilization. "The message of *Paisan*," he wrote in locating the essential falsity in Roberto Rossellini's episodic account of World War II in Italy,

> is that the whole meaning of war (indeed, the whole meaning of history) is suffering and death. Moral and political differences are obscured: the death of a fascist equals the death of a partisan. . . . This view of war is always valid: Falstaff is more nearly right than Prince Hal, and Thersites than Ulysses. But it is also a view that has a special attraction for a defeated fascist nation, and Rossellini cannot restrain himself from taking a special advantage of it; there must always be one more push—and it always destroys his position, for if death and suffering are not *in themselves* the greatest of misfortunes, then we are back in the field of politics and morals, and it is Prince Hal who is right.

It is hard to imagine a single other writer, either a half-century ago or now, who might have written those lines. Reading them, we are left once again to calculate what we have lost.

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OBSERVATIONS

Visions of Ground Zero

Michael J. Lewis

WHAT HAPPENS when some of America's most valuable commercial property becomes the locus of an epic national event? At present, the void where the World Trade Center once stood in New York City is the nation's most poignant pilgrimage destination—a bleak and unsettling place that is at once a crime scene, a battlefield, and a cemetery. But it is also our most eligible construction site: sixteen acres of land at the foot of Wall Street, the epicenter of world capitalism. At first blush, it is impossible to reconcile these fundamentally opposed concepts—sacred terrain, or mere real estate?—but in the next few months both developers and the officials charged with overseeing the site will be asked to do just that.

In ordinary times, there would be no conflict. The disposition of ground zero, as it is now called, would be the prerogative of Larry A. Silverstein, the real-estate developer who acquired the lease to the World Trade Center last July. But this is hardly an ordinary moment. For the first time since the building of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., an architectural question has become a matter of intense national debate.

Within a few days of the September 11 attacks, hastily devised proposals for new buildings and memorials at the New York site were already darting about the Internet. Some of these were stirring. They included the "Towers of Light," a proposal by the architects Gustavo Bonevardi and John Bennett (modified by others, renamed "Tribute in Light," and scheduled for temporary installation on March 11) to create a diaphanous image of the towers with lasers pointed skyward. Others were stirring in a different way. One popular proposal called for a cluster of five towers suggesting a fist with an upraised central shaft: an image that well captured the belligerent spirit of those early weeks.

Other influential voices were also to be heard, however, and these rejected any expansive gestures at all. The ruins of the buildings themselves, it was said, especially the seven-story lattice of steel that was all that remained of the south tower, made for a more appropriate memorial than any self-conscious artistic creation. Philippe de Montebello, the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, wrote on September 25 that this ghostly arcade would be a "fitting, realistic, and moving monument to those who died there."

For such a monument there was, indeed, ample precedent, including England's Coventry Cathedral and the *Gedächtnis-Kirche* in central Berlin, both of which turn the hulk of a burned-out church into the heart of a war monument. But on the very same day Montebello wrote, workmen at ground zero had begun demolishing the steel frame in question, which could not be permitted to stand during the strenuous labor of clearing the site. Although Mayor Rudolph Giuliani ordered the fragments stored for possible reuse, their removal immediately altered their meaning, which was entirely a function of their grim authenticity.

BETWEEN THESE options, the public wavered. A Harris poll taken a

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few weeks after the attacks showed sentiment split into three nearly equal factions: those who would rebuild the towers exactly as they had been, those who would rebuild in a different form, and those who preferred to dedicate the entire site as a monument. Of these, the first—swift and fearless replication—was in some ways the most attractive: an act of cheeky defiance that would proclaim an America unbowed. In the October issue of *Architectural Record*, several of the country's leading architects endorsed this idea, among them the successor firm of Minoru Yamasaki, who had designed the original complex.

But this option soon fell by the wayside. To re-create buildings that had already twice been the victims of determined international terrorists (the first time in 1993) would be to tempt fate. Tenants would assuredly be scarce, insurers still scarcer. Or so at least calculated Silverstein who, working with the architectural firm of Skidmore Owings Merrill, proposed instead a knot of 50-story (later amended to 60-story) towers, well under the 110 stories of the originals. These buildings would correspond roughly to the height of the surrounding cityscape, and would thus incidentally defuse the most unpopular aspect of the old towers, namely, their haughty indifference to scale and context.

But by this point Silverstein no longer had an entirely free hand. In November, Governor George Pataki formed the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), a city-state partnership to coordinate the work of reconstruction. Its chairman, John C. Whitehead (a former head of Goldman Sachs), was given a vague formal mandate—"to oversee the rebuilding and revitalization of lower Manhattan"—but it was understood that he would represent concerns other than the merely commercial, and in particular the sentiments of residents, community groups, and victims' families.

Complicating the task of the LMDC was the widespread belief that the site should be reserved as a *national* shrine, on the order of Gettysburg or Valley Forge. This feeling ran especially high among survivors' advocacy groups, such as September's Mission, and elicited much public sympathy. On December 7, the National Park Trust also weighed in, urging that the site be treated with the same scrupulous safeguards as a federal park. Shortly thereafter, Whitehead announced plans for a provisional memorial, a "green space for quiet contemplation" that would serve until a permanent one could be built.

Surprisingly, the proposal drew support from Giuliani, a business-friendly mayor who nevertheless closed out his term with a stirring call to exempt the entire sixteen-acre site from commercial use. "We should think about a soaring, monumental, beautiful memorial that just draws millions of people here, that just want to see it. If the memorial was done correctly you'll have all the economic development you want." This declaration marked the high-water mark of anti-development sentiment.

Nature, however, abhors no vacuum so much as a vacant lot in Manhattan. After a decent interval, and after securing a promise of insurance settlements, Silverstein announced his first building plans in early February. A new, smaller office tower would rise on the site of 7 World Trade Center, which collapsed late in the afternoon of September 11.

The project was carefully chosen. Situated on Vesey Street, across from the twin towers, the lot is at the periphery of ground zero, whose future development it would not constrain. Nor, since 7 World Trade Center evidently collapsed without loss of life, would building on the site desecrate hallowed land. Nevertheless, Silverstein's announcement was greeted with dismay, for it seemed to presage a process of nibbling away at the pieces of ground zero until ultimately the opportunity for a great national memorial would be lost. Although Silverstein had been working assiduously with the LMDC to make his building as agreeable as possible to the inhabitants of lower Manhattan, both Pataki and New York's new mayor, Michael Bloomberg, were suggesting by late February that nothing should go ahead until an overall plan for the area was completed. The battle over 7 World Trade Center is undoubtedly a portent of things to come.

IN THE meantime, the purely architectural opportunities afforded by the World Trade Center site have galvanized the profession as it has not been galvanized since the great skyscraper wars of the 1920's. Here had stood the city's tallest buildings, on the city's most prominent site—the very prow of the island. And here now was a great swath of open space, on the scale of the Rockefeller Center complex, where one might do much more than shoehorn a slender office tower. For architects, this was a "commission" of a kind that comes very few times in a century.

In short order, unsolicited designs, renderings, and idea sketches poured forth. Seizing the moment, the New York gallery of Max Protech organized an exhibition entitled "A New World Trade Center: Design Proposals." On display were projects by 50 architects, many of them international celebrities like Hans Hollein, Steven Holl, Daniel Libeskind, and Zaha Hadid.*

Most of the exhibitors offered visionary new forms of the skyscraper. The few exceptions included Frei Otto of Germany, who, declining to build a "Tower of Babel," suggested instead a quiet healing park from which all architectural elements

* The exhibition ran from January 17 to February 16 at the Max Protech Gallery and will open at the American Building Museum in Washington, D.C. on April 7.

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were kept away, and Eytan Kaufman, who designed a vast pedestrian bridge to New Jersey. Aside from these, the exhibition consisted almost entirely of picaresque behemoths, ranging from the unbuildable to the megalomaniacal.

It is difficult to convey how tragically bad most of them were: frenzied and overwrought performances falsely exploiting the dignity of the site itself. Lars Spuybroek's reeling "Oblique WTC" was representative of the lot: several towers rising from multiple limbs that writhe in space until they converge three-quarters of the way up, creating something like a conventional skyline but also something that buildings of the past had not been thought to need: a crotch. Other proposals similarly undulated and quivered, reflecting the persistent, baleful influence on contemporary architecture of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. A wavy array of green and red skyscraper-sized tendrils contributed by the firm of Jack and MacFarlane, intended to serve as an "allegory" of the ruins, suggested nothing so much as Chinese food left for too long in the refrigerator.

For all its self-conscious edginess and originality, a certain mustiness clung to this exhibit. Many of the designs inescapably evoked moments from the 1960's like the spontaneous architectural happenings of the Archigram group, whose psychedelic renderings envisioned "instant cities" descending from spaceships. One project for a 110-story "building riddled with holes" and already "pre-exploded"—presumably to save future terrorists the trouble—loomed in drawings like a Swiss-cheese leviathan and might have leaped from the pages of Claes Oldenburg's sketchbook. This was the work of Vito Acconci, the performance artist once celebrated for public onanism; it at least confirmed his aesthetic consistency.

Along with stale architecture came a considerable amount of stale politics. Worst in this regard was the "e-motive architecture" of the Dutchman Kas Oosterhuis. This depicted a building that would constantly change shape in accordance with the calendar and with shifting needs, assuming the exact physical form of the World Trade Center every September 11. It came complete with a vulgar printed harangue urging, "Come on America, wake up. Do not waste our precious time on the easy killing of poorly armed people."

Apart from a few glib gestures, almost none of the exhibits offered anything in the way of a real memorial. In fact, many of the participating architects expressed hostility to any such thing, disparaging the "monumental petrification of mourning" (Spuybroek) or a "sentimental physical memorial" (Hariri & Hariri). Their quirky, festive skyscrapers would instead impose flourishes and squiggles on the skyline that would speak less to a pilgrim arriving on foot in search of solemnity than to a distant and distracted commuter stuck in traffic on the New Jersey Turnpike across the river.

FOR SENSITIVE designs at human scale, one had to look elsewhere. Particularly thoughtful was the scheme by the firm of Franck Kohsen McCrery that was published in the Autumn 2001 issue of *City Journal*. Their work not only commemorates the September attacks with a noble memorial plaza, enriched with public sculpture, but would also restore something of the traditional streetscape of lower Manhattan. Although the architects were hardly so crass as to say so, the truth is that the original World Trade Center plaza was something of a crater, and rather totalitarian in scale. In its place they have sutured together the streets it had sundered, reestablishing the traditional street pattern of lower Manhattan (which, it must be pointed out, is not the fixed and inflexible grid of upper Manhattan but much looser and more relaxed).

Working in collaboration with the sculptor Alexander Stoddart, these architects also devised a haunting piece of statuary for their plaza: a pair of oversized figures representing History and Memory atop a draped catafalque, a tacit acknowledgment that for many victims of the attack, this is an ultimate resting place. A similarly inspired monument appearing in the same issue of *City Journal* was proposed by the artist Elliott Banfield and Henry Hope Reed, the architect and founder of an organization that works to reinvigorate the tradition of classicism in the arts. Banfield and Reed envision a column that would serve as the terminating gesture in an arcaded urban plaza. Like Stoddart's plan, it, too, is firmly rooted in history, recalling the memorial column with which London announced its renewal after the great fire of 1666.

As dignified and handsome as these schemes are, they have not enjoyed anywhere near the resonance of those electrifying designs shown by Max Protech, which have been widely disseminated over the Internet. It is not hard to see why. Designing with the physical experience of the space in mind, thinking a project through in terms of civic function, are crippling defects in a contest that is being waged essentially by means of electronic imagery.

Most Americans experienced the attack vicariously on television, and tend to judge its proposed monuments by how well they look on computer screens. Such is the unconscious authority of the familiar. And here Protech's architects, many of whom themselves clearly designed their work on the computer, stand on advantageous ground. The same can be said for the "Towers of Light," or for the designs of Fred Bernstein, an artist who has proposed extending two great piers out into New York harbor, evoking the World Trade Center towers as two collapsed slabs in the water. All of these offer a set of substitute motifs

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that are meant to compete with a viewer's (far more vivid) mental images of the actual toppling towers. An unbuilt monument to a terrible event thus threatens to turn into a monument to a horrifying day before the television set.

But there is something else at work in these designs as well. The World Trade Center attack was an immense propaganda coup. The awful formal symmetry of the events—a slow-motion death march, carried out to a four-four rhythm of crash *crash* collapse *collapse*—possesses an almost mythic quality, which can easily overwhelm any insufficiently brazen monument. In Oklahoma City, the site of the 1997 bombing of the federal building by Timothy McVeigh is marked by a congregation of empty chairs—a feeble gesture, however soothing it may be to survivors. The fractured towers and mutilated geometries proposed by the competitors in the Max Protech Gallery run the opposite risk: commemorating not the victims but the mad sweep and audacity of the killers.

A MONUMENT is not a novel, and should not be cluttered with details, incidents, and anecdotes. Its task is to sift through events, to see large outlines, to separate the enduring from what is merely temporary or accidental. The Lincoln Memorial in Washington rightly neglects to inform us that our great President was at times a ruthless political intriguer. Through the filter of time, we can see large acts and achievements in relief, purged of distraction.

This is precisely what we cannot yet do in the present instance—which is why it is foolhardy, in my opinion, to devise a war memorial while the war is still in progress. (A transitional monument, like the "Tribute in Light," elegiac and yet ephemeral in character, is something else again.) There will be time enough for us to take a truer measure of September 11. In taking that measure, moreover, we ought not forget that the events of that day unfolded not in New York alone but on three different battlefields in three different parts of the country. Although each of them deserves recognition, no doubt there should be one monument to stand for all—and there is at least as much to be said for its being elsewhere as in New York.

If there is any site that deserves a national shrine to September 11, it is the field in southwestern Pennsylvania where United Airlines flight 93 crashed. This was the one consolation of that mournful day, when the fate of the U.S. Capitol (the terrorists' most likely target) was decided on a battlefield no wider than the aisle of a commercial airliner by passengers so poorly armed that they joked about having to use plastic cutlery in their attempt to overwhelm and disarm the hijackers. Here, unlike at the World Trade Center, and unlike at the Pentagon, no jumble of visual images competes with our imagination, and a monument might fittingly address the mind and spirit rather than merely revivifying televised memories. Nor would a visitor to this site be tempted to think that what was being mourned was a pair of 1970's minimalist skyscrapers. There is, indeed, no more fitting subject for a memorial than the story of United 93 and of Todd Beamer, Jeremy Glick, and Thomas Bennett, protagonists of one of the most terrible and enthralling episodes of self-sacrifice in American history.

As for New York, it is of the greatest national importance that the city rebuild itself. There is a moral obligation to do so. Leaving the burned hulks of churches as a visible warning to future generations may have been right in postwar Germany, but here it would strike a note of mortification and penance inappropriate to our circumstances. As with every city that has survived earthquake, fire, and flood, from London to Lisbon, the proper and fitting course is to rebuild. Not to do so is to proceed from injury to self-mutilation. Perhaps one day our cities shall crumble and, as in ancient Carthage, our enemies will sow our fields with salt. There is no reason to start the process now.

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The Great American Songbook: Part 3

Terry Teachout

Though America flooded the Western world with countless pop-culture exports during the 20th century, it is hard to think of one that has given more lasting pleasure to more people than our vast catalogue of pre-rock popular song—unless it is our comparably long list of pre-rock popular singers.

Like jazz, the other musical idiom with which American popular song is indissolubly commingled, the Great American Songbook (as the finest of these songs have come to be collectively known) is no longer seen as purely popular. The best efforts of the great professionals—the Irving Berlins and George Gershwins and Cole Porters—are increasingly regarded as comparable in artistic quality with the "art songs" performed in recital by classical singers. Indeed, many classical singers themselves now routinely program selections from the Great American Songbook, though few perform them with anything like the idiomatic grace of such noted pop and jazz singers as Fred Astaire, Nat Cole, or Helen Forrest.

In order to illustrate the intimate relationship between American popular song and American popular singing, I have compiled an annotated list of 50 American pop singers of the 20th century, each one performing a different song. What follows is the third installment of that list; parts 1 and 2 appeared in the February and March issues of Commentary.

This is not a "canon." Many previous attempts have been made to draw up more specifically canonical lists, some of them quite plausible, of major songs and singers.* But, particularly in light of the fact that recordings by pre-rock singers go in and out of print with some frequency, I have opted instead for the more personal and modest goal of simply discussing 50 of my favorite songs as recorded by 50 of my favorite singers in performances currently available on CD. My purpose has been to suggest the remarkable range of the pop-song idiom—hence the absence of many well-known songs and singers, and the presence of some less well-known pairings equally worthy of serious attention.

26. **Jack Jones**: "You Must Believe in Spring." Music by Michel Legrand, lyrics by Jacques Demy and Alan and Marilyn Bergman.

Michel Legrand is one of the few European-born songwriters to have completely mastered the American popular-song idiom, in part because his involvement in this country's musical life has been so extensive. A fluent jazz pianist who has also worked with success as a jazz and pop arranger, Legrand is now known primarily as a composer of film music. Most of his songs were themselves written for movie soundtracks, among them the exquisite "You Must Believe in Spring," drawn from *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort* (1966). Director Jacques Demy's original French lyric was deftly adapted by Alan and Marilyn Bergman, with whom Legrand subsequently wrote numerous standards.

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* One of the best of these efforts was *American Popular Song: Six Decades of Songwriters and Singers*, a fine boxed set published in 1984 by the Smithsonian Institution—now, alas, out of print.

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Jack Jones was one of the very last singers of standards to become famous prior to the rise of rock-and-roll. The son of Allan Jones, a light-opera singer of the 1930's and 1940's, he is, like Tony Bennett, a full-voiced tenor who typically sings in high-baritone keys—what opera connoisseurs call a "lazy tenor"—and is greatly admired for the unusual finish of his vocal technique. In common with most traditional pop singers active in the 1960's and 1970's, Jones sang and recorded a good deal of second-rate material, and his highly developed technique tempted him to indulge in excessive displays of virtuosity, but in recent years his singing has become purer in style. A superb example of his later work is the precisely controlled performance of "You Must Believe in Spring"; he recorded it in 1998 with Mike Renzi, a jazz pianist who specializes in accompanying singers (*Jack Jones Paints a Tribute to Tony Bennett*, Honest OME 1021).

27. **Rebecca Kilgore**: "Glad to Be Unhappy." Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Lorenz Hart.

No lyricist wrote darker love songs than Lorenz Hart, and none of his lyrics is more characteristic than "Glad to Be Unhappy." Its deliberately paradoxical words, set with grace by Richard Rodgers, could have stood as an epitaph for the desperately unhappy Hart: "Unrequited love's a bore/And I've got it pretty bad/But for someone you adore/It's a pleasure to be sad."

Rebecca Kilgore, who lives and works in Portland, Oregon, has a bright, open vocal timbre that recalls the big-band singers of the Swing Era. She appears regularly with the pianist-songwriter Dave Frishberg, and their latest CD, a live duet album called *The Starlit Hour*, contains a version of "Glad to Be Unhappy" whose unadorned simplicity is characteristic of Kilgore's engaging style (*The Starlit Hour*, Arbors Jazz ARCD 19255).

28. **Diana Krall**: "I Get Along Without You Very Well (Except Sometimes)." Music by Hoagy Carmichael, lyrics by Carmichael, based on a poem by Jane Brown Thompson.

Though Hoagy Carmichael rarely wrote the words for his own songs, he took a close and actively collaborative interest in the efforts of the lyricists with whom he worked. In one notable instance, "I Get Along Without You Very Well," he turned a piece of light verse by an obscure poet, Jane Brown Thompson, into one of the finest lyrics of the 1930's, setting it to an uncommonly poignant melody whose balanced phrases, like those of such other Carmichael tunes as "Skylark," immediately recall the "correlated phrasing" of the jazz cornetist Bix Beiderbecke.

Diana Krall, a Canadian jazz pianist who, like Nat Cole, started singing professionally after she had already begun appearing as an instrumentalist, unexpectedly became a full-fledged pop star in the 1990's—the first vocalist of her generation to win mass popularity by singing standard ballads. Certain critics, deceived by the shrewd marketing campaign that brought her to the attention of the American public, have dismissed her as excessively commercial in style; but she is in fact a first-class balladeer and a hard-swinging jazz pianist—one of the best self-accompanists since Cole—and her pungently colored mezzo voice is heard to particularly fine effect in her recent recording of "I Get Along Without You Very Well." The pastel orchestral accompaniment is by Claus Ogerman, a German classical composer who has also written arrangements for such jazz and pop artists as Bill Evans, Frank Sinatra, and João Gilberto (*The Look of Love*, Verve 314 549 846-2).

29. **Cleo Laine**: "Anyone Can Whistle." Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

A student of the avant-garde classical composer Milton Babbitt and a protégé of the veteran lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II, Stephen Sondheim emerged in the 1970's as the last major figure in traditional American musical comedy—though his technically adventurous songs have also proved hugely influential with a new generation of theater composers. Most of Sondheim's songs are too closely connected to the shows for which they were written to be fully intelligible outside their original contexts, while his oblique melodies and emotionally ambivalent lyrics are of limited appeal to many singers (and listeners). But a few of his best songs have become standards, including "Anyone Can Whistle," a melancholy monologue about inhibition—one of Sondheim's recurring themes—set to a perfectly balanced, immediately memorable tune whose wide leaps underline the hesitant hopefulness of the lyric.

Born in London of mixed West Indian and English parentage, Cleo Laine has an unusually flexible voice with a distinctively tawny timbre. A pop singer who is comfortable with jazz rhythms, she has performed and recorded a remarkable variety of music (including an English-language version of Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*). Though her interpretations can be overripe to the point of self-parody, Laine's performance of "Anyone Can Whistle," part of a well-chosen program of Sondheim songs, is both unaffected and deeply affecting. The luminous orchestration is by Jonathan Tunick, who has scored most of Sondheim's Broadway shows (*Cleo Sings Sondheim*, RCA Victor 7702-2-RC).

30. **Barbara Lea**: "Guess I'll Go Back Home (This Summer)." Music by Willard Robison, lyrics by Ray Mayer.

Most of the best-known standards are both urbane in tone and urban in setting and subject matter, but three major American songwriters—Hoagy Carmichael, Johnny Mercer, and Willard Robison—

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deviated from that path, choosing instead to give their work a regional flavor. Robison, the least well-remembered of the three, was a Missouri-born singer and pianist who was briefly popular in the 1920's and 1930's as a radio entertainer. Many of his songs, in particular the sweetly nostalgic "Guess I'll Go Back Home (This Summer)," portray an idyllic small-town world—as well as a remembered innocence, lost in adulthood.

Virtually unknown save to her fellow musicians and a small but passionately loyal cadre of connoisseurs, Barbara Lea sings well-chosen standards in a quiet, unassuming, unselfconsciously tasteful style. Few singers of her generation have been better able to illuminate the subtleties of a first-class lyric. Among Lea's most impressive albums is a collection of eighteen Robison songs containing the best recorded interpretation of "Guess I'll Go Back Home (This Summer)" (*The Devil Is Afraid of Music*, Audiophile ACD-119).

31. **Peggy Lee**: "Days of Wine and Roses." Music by Henry Mancini, lyrics by Johnny Mercer.

Like many composers who worked in Hollywood after the rise of rock, Henry Mancini acquired a not altogether undeserved reputation as a purveyor of easy-listening music for middlebrows, and the vast popularity of such instrumental miniatures as "Baby Elephant Walk" and "The Pink Panther" obscured his ability to write consummately singable melodies. Frequently working in collaboration with the nonpareil lyricist Johnny Mercer, Mancini wrote some of the most memorable standards of the postwar era; most of them, like the poignant "Days of Wine and Roses," were originally conceived as theme songs for hit movies.

Peggy Lee emerged from the Benny Goodman band to become one of the biggest pop stars of the 1950's and 1960's. A talented songwriter in her own right, she was, with her flute-like voice and uncanny rhythmic poise, equally at home with ballads and up-tempo swing. Lee recorded more extensively than any other female singer of her generation, continuing to make records for Capitol well into the 1970's, long after most non-rock artists had been dropped by the major labels. Though it is impossible to choose a single recording that is more than partially representative of her protean style, her version of "Days of Wine and Roses," delicately accompanied by a sextet of Los Angeles jazzmen, is a good example of her hushed way with a ballad (*Mink Jazz*, Capitol CDP 95450).

32. **Julie London**: "Laura." Music by David Raksin, lyrics by Johnny Mercer.

While many standards have been written for films, "Laura" is one of the few to have been based on a theme from a previously written background score. *Laura*, a sophisticated film noir directed by Otto Preminger, features a monothematic score by the distinguished Hollywood composer David Raksin. The theme—never heard in its entirety during the movie—was subsequently fitted with a lyric by Johnny Mercer, and to the amazement of musicians who took it for granted that so complex a melody would never appeal to a mass audience, it quickly became one of the biggest hits of 1945.

Julie London, a sultry starlet married in turn to Jack Webb, the creator of *Dragnet*, and Bobby Troup, the composer of such novelty songs as "Route 66," made her recorded debut as a singer in 1955 with an album of standards sparely accompanied by the guitarist Barney Kessel and the bassist Ray Leatherwood and featuring a cheesecake photo of the singer on the album cover. *Julie Is Her Name* became a runaway hit, and made London one of the top nightclub draws of the 1950's. Though her pinup-girl image contributed to her success, London's uncomplicated, fresh-voiced style was appealing, too, as can be heard in the lovely performance of "Laura" (*Julie Is Her Name, Vols. 1 and 2*, EMI 7 99804 2).

33. **Dean Martin**: "Imagination." Music by Jimmy Van Heusen, lyrics by Johnny Burke.

Jimmy Van Heusen, a consummately professional Hollywood composer with a penchant for jazzily chromatic bass lines, composed a large and impressive body of standards, working first with the lyricist Johnny Burke (with whom he wrote for Bing Crosby) and later with Sammy Cahn (with whom he wrote for his close friend Frank Sinatra). Many of his ballads lend themselves to gently swinging interpretations, none more so than "Imagination," whose bridge is built around two cunningly juxtaposed upward-sweeping scales.

Dean Martin is now mainly remembered as a hard-drinking TV star and screen comedian who never took himself—or his work—seriously. From time to time, though, he recorded an album that was worthy of his considerable gifts, and the Italianate warmth of his Crosby-influenced baritone is showcased on *This Time I'm Swingin'!*, which includes a delightful version of "Imagination." The orchestral accompaniment is by Nelson Riddle, the foremost vocal arranger of the 1950's and early 1960's, who is best known for his collaborations with Frank Sinatra. Riddle added strings and symphonic woodwinds to the standard big-band lineup of the Swing Era to create a distinctive sound that would become the universally recognized instrumental signature of classic 1950's pop (*This Time I'm Swingin'!/Pretty Baby*, Capitol/EMI 8 54546 2).

34. **Carmen McRae**: "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye." Music and lyrics by Cole Porter.

Though Cole Porter is most vividly remembered for his hyper-

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sophisticated lyrics, his strongest songs were the passionate ballads in which he gave free rein to the romanticism that he normally kept under the tightest possible control. In "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye," Porter's peerless technique as a lyricist is used not for its own sake but to express intense emotion with impressive economy. Note especially the repeated use of the dangerously wide-open long "i" in the opening couplet: "Ev'ry time we say goodbye I die a little/Ev'ry time we say goodbye I wonder why a little."

Many jazz singers are so preoccupied with the challenge of improvisation that they neglect to make the most of the carefully crafted tunes—and lyrics—that they sing. Carmen McRae was an improviser par excellence, but she also knew how to present a song instead of merely using it as a vehicle, and her sword-sharp voice and unsentimental, implicitly ironic interpretative approach add a new layer of implication to "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" (*Carmen McRae Sings Great American Songwriters*, Decca Jazz/GRP GRD-631).

35. **Mabel Mercer**: "Did You Ever Cross Over to Sneden's?" Music and lyrics by Alec Wilder.

In addition to writing *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900-1950*, Alec Wilder distinguished himself both as a popular songwriter and as one of the few classical composers to have made idiomatic use of the language of popular music. (He blended the two in the series of octets for woodwinds, harpsichord, and jazz rhythm section that he composed and recorded in the 1940's.) While he had a few hits, most notably "I'll Be Around," Wilder was a "songwriter's songwriter," esteemed by colleagues and performers—including Frank Sinatra—but little known to the public at large. "Did You Ever Cross Over to Sneden's?," perhaps the most admired of his songs, is a wrenching meditation on love and loss whose rhythmically square-cut phrases have a distinctly hymn-like feel. Like many of Wilder's so-called popular songs, it is surprisingly close in character—and quality—to classical art song.

Wilder liked to write for artists he knew, and "Did You Ever Cross Over to Sneden's?" was composed for Mabel Mercer, a cabaret singer whose other fans included Sinatra and Billie Holiday. Mercer is an acquired taste: her voice was wobbly and unsensuous, and in her old age she was rarely capable of doing much more than lightly sketching the contours of the melodies she "sang." But within the compass of her narrow vocal range and austere timbre, she was able to evoke a startlingly wide range of emotions, and no popular singer, not even Sinatra, was capable of finding more meaning in a lyric. In addition, Mercer sang with great musicality, loosening up the written rhythms of a melody so as to make them accord with the natural rhythms of speech. In her recording of "Did You Ever Cross Over to Sneden's?" which became one of her signature pieces, her idiosyncratic style can be heard at its most immediately convincing (*The Art of Mabel Mercer*, Collectables Jazz Classics COL-CD-6838).

36. **Joe Mooney**: "But Beautiful." Music by Jimmy Van Heusen, lyrics by Johnny Burke.

Bing Crosby's relaxed, nonchalant style influenced not only singers but songwriters, who appreciated his unfailing lightness of touch. Diffident about the unmediated expression of emotion, he preferred not to sing lyrics that contained the phrase, "I love you." Johnny Burke, who in the 1940's wrote many songs for Crosby's films, found countless ways to avoid the fatal words, none more ingenious than his wonderfully conversational lyric for "But Beautiful," a song that also features one of Jimmy Van Heusen's most apposite melodies.

Of all the many jazz instrumentalists who have doubled as singers, none was more musically creative than Joe Mooney. The quartet he led in the late 1940's, which featured his intricate arrangements and bop-flavored accordion playing, can stand direct comparison with the far better-known King Cole Trio. Though Mooney's small, short-breathed voice was less distinctive than Cole's warm baritone, he used it with uncommon sensitivity, and his readings of standard ballads are every bit as effective as his droll versions of the novelty tunes both men liked to sing. "But Beautiful," recorded with a small woodwind ensemble in 1964, also offers a brief glimpse of the surprising elegance with which Mooney played the plebeian accordion (*The Happiness of Joe Mooney/The Greatness of Joe Mooney*, Koch Jazz KOC-CD-7886).

37. **Joan Morris**: "I'm Old Fashioned." Music by Jerome Kern, lyrics by Johnny Mercer.

Jerome Kern worked with a variety of lyricists during his long and influential career, including a late but triumphant partnership with Johnny Mercer, with whom he wrote the score for the Fred Astaire-Rita Hayworth film *You Were Never Lovelier*. "I'm Old Fashioned," the hit song from that movie, features a Kern melody of near-operatic amplitude, original in form (ABCA, with a slightly varied repetition of the first strain) and full of harmonic surprises. Mercer rarely wrote a bad lyric, but this one is superior even by his exalted standards.

Unlike the other singers in this series, Joan Morris performs exclusively in concert (rather than in clubs), accompanied by the composer-pianist William Bolcom, her husband and regular recital partner. Her huge repertoire encompasses everything from such turn-of-the-century ballads as "Love's Old Sweet Song" to Bolcom's not-quite-classical cabaret songs, all of which she sings "straight," performing the melodies exactly as written. Though her clas-

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sically trained mezzo-soprano voice is small and undistinguished in timbre, Morris uses it with a Mabel Mercer-like sensitivity to the rhythms of natural speech, and her ability to "read" a lyric is unrivaled by any singer of her generation (*Let's Do It: Bolcom & Morris at Aspen*, Omega OCD 3004).

38. **John Pizzarelli**: "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket." Music and lyrics by Irving Berlin.

No one wrote more songs for Fred Astaire—or better ones—than Irving Berlin. The rhythmic lightness that Astaire carried over from his dancing, as well as the clarity and directness of his delivery, inspired Berlin to some of his finest work, especially in "rhythm songs" like "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket" (from *Follow the Fleet*, in which Astaire was teamed with Ginger Rogers). As usual with Berlin, "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket" seems perfectly simple at first glance, but the key changes heard in the bridge are no less typical of a songwriter whose work is full of what the jazz critic Whitney Balliett once called "the sound of surprise."

John Pizzarelli, with Diana Krall the most deservedly popular of the contemporary singers whose styles are rooted in the music of the pre-rock era, is an accomplished jazz guitarist who sings standards in a sweet, light-footed tenor that at times suggests a cross between Astaire and Chet Baker. His working group, heard on this performance of "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket," plays with an infectious zest reminiscent of the King Cole Trio, the ensemble on which it is modeled (*Let There Be Love*, Telarc CD-83518).

39. **Polly Podewell**: "After You, Who?" Music and lyrics by Cole Porter.

Fred Astaire sang "After You, Who?" in the 1932 Broadway show *The Gay Divorcé*, but the song was dropped from the score when the show was renamed *The Gay Divorcée* and turned into the first of the Astaire-Rogers film musicals. In common with the other Porter ballads I have chosen for this series, it is both comparatively unfamiliar and different in tone from Porter's better-known songs—"sadder and not so clever and sophisticated," in the words of Polly Podewell, one of the few contemporary singers to have recorded "After You, Who?" Like "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" and "Dream Dancing," it is striking in the directness of its emotional appeal.

Long after the big bands of the 1930's and 1940's ceased to be a major force in American popular music, young singers continued to do impressive work with such groups. Polly Podewell, for example, appeared in the 1970's and 1980's with the bands of Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, and Buddy Rich; her low, slightly edgy voice is perfect for "After You, Who?," which she sings in a smoothly gliding medium tempo, letting Porter's lyric speak eloquently for itself. Her accompanists include Ross Tompkins, the long-time pianist of the *Tonight Show* band under Doc Severinsen, and Jake Hanna, one of the greatest big-band drummers of the postwar era (*Don't You Know I Care?*, Audiophile ACD-276).

40. **Annie Ross**: "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face." Music by Frederick Loewe, lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner.

My Fair Lady, an adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, was one of the last indisputable triumphs of the Broadway musical. In tone more like an operetta than a conventional Broadway show, it was filled from start to finish with hit songs, the most lastingly popular of which has been "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face." It is no insult to Frederick Loewe's handsome melody to suggest that the ultimate source of the song's appeal is the lyric by Alan Jay Lerner: a heartfelt "list song" in which a lover describes all the aspects of his beloved that, once taken for granted, have now become indispensable.

Annie Ross became famous as a member of Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross, the trio that popularized "vocalese," a style in which complicated lyrics are written to pre-existing jazz solos. But while she was spectacularly adept at tossing off such tongue-twisting lyrics, her cool, subdued voice was equally well suited to standards like "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" (sung here with a change of pronouns). In this 1957 performance, Ross is gracefully accompanied by the Gerry Mulligan Quartet, the piano-less ensemble that was one of the most successful and admired jazz combos of the 1950's (*Annie Ross Sings a Song with Mulligan*, Pacific Jazz 7 46852 2).

To be continued

Except as indicated, all of the CD's mentioned above can be purchased online by viewing this article during the month of April at COMMENTARY's website:
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Books in Review

Curious George

Soros:
The Life and Times of
a Messianic Billionaire
by Michael T. Kaufman
Knopf. 344 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

NOBODY HAS ever satisfactorily explained the magical accomplishments of the Hungarian Jews. A persecuted minority in a land whose language is unfathomable to all others, they have been fantastically over-represented among high achievers in almost every field of cultural and scientific endeavor. Émigrés from this small community have included John von Neumann, Leo Szilard, Eugene Wigner, Theodore von Kármán, and Edward Teller, all major players in America's World War II military/scientific research effort. In his *Memoirs*, which I reviewed in these pages last December, Teller mentions the mischievous explanation put forward by von Kármán (founder of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board) that they were really all extraterrestrials. In recent years, the most astounding of them all has been George Soros, the billionaire money-manager, philanthropist, and "stateless statesman."

Soros, now the subject of a workmanlike, readable biography by Michael T. Kaufman—a journalist long based at the *New York Times*—is like no other billionaire. His bundle ($6.9 billion, according to the most recent *Forbes* listing) is smaller than that of many other Americans (22 others, according to *Forbes*). It is nowhere near the $50-odd billion that Microsoft founder Bill Gates is worth. But Soros is unique in his relentless, somewhat obsessive, determination to use his money to change the world.

Soros is a deadly serious person. During his 46 years in the United States, Kaufman tells us, he has apparently never watched a baseball or football game. He is possibly the only private citizen on the planet who could have stated (in 1999): "Yes, I do have a foreign policy, and now I have it more consciously. My goal is to become the conscience of the world." Kaufman assures us that those words "sounded less pompous in conversation than they appear in print," but one can have no doubts as to the speaker's earnestness.

Soros wants not only to change the world, but to persuade the world that he is a deep thinker. He has written several books on assorted global issues, and an endless number of op-eds. He has recurrently shown up at conferences to study, say, the Kyoto Protocol on climate change (which he strongly endorses), or the expansion of NATO (about which he has reservations). Bold as brass, he keeps thrusting himself and his ideas on world statesmen, and has at various times been close to South Africa's Nelson Mandela, the Czech Republic's Václav Havel, Poland's General Wojciech Jaruzelski, and America's Henry Kissinger. (Yes, Kissinger takes him seriously. Or, at least, says he does.) Once, eager to meet a Gorbachev adviser named Tatyana Zaslavskaya, whom he hoped to recruit for one of his world-bettering enterprises, Soros learned that she was

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visiting the U.S. as part of a 170-member delegation. He unabashedly invited the whole delegation to dinner at his Fifth Avenue apartment and arranged for Zaslavskaya to sit next to him. They had, he later reported, a "wonderful meeting of minds," although she apparently declined to join the board of his Russian foundation.

Designed to implement Soros's vision for change is a worldwide network of national foundations, social initiatives, and miscellaneous grants, not to mention the Soros-created-and-endowed Central European University in Budapest. I kept looking in Kaufman's book for some kind of total program count, but it is not there, possibly because nobody knows how to count it all. One learns that Aryeh Neier, who took over in 1991 as the manager of all these efforts, needed many months to figure out what it was he was running, and even then kept bumping into surprises, like the $13 million a year Soros was spending to support Yugoslav students abroad. (Neier had previously managed the American Civil Liberties Union, Helsinki Watch, and Human Rights Watch.) If you check in at Soros's website (www.soros.org) and try to make your own tally of all the operations, you will instantly find yourself in trouble.

Whatever the total, the national foundations are intended to sustain "open societies"—in effect, liberal democracies—in countries previously dominated by dogmatism and dictatorship. So what does the Open Society Foundation for Albania do with the $5 million or so per year that Soros bestows on it? It runs advisory centers for college students. It somehow helps the country's Institute of Contemporary Studies contribute "alternatives to government policy debates." It provides training and technical assistance for a theatrical program. It trains librarians, supports programs that resist violence against women, assists government agencies trying to improve local services, assists a networking program that encourages skilled young people to stay in Albania, and has supported a TV campaign addressing "issues of ownership, conflict, and blood vengeance." And a lot more. And that is just Albania.

THERE APPEARS to be nothing in George Soros's early years to suggest either his future riches or his "messianic" propensities (note the subtitle of Kaufman's book). Like just about everybody else who survived the Nazis and Communists in Central Europe, he has a riveting story to tell about his escape to freedom, although, on Kaufman's rendering, he seems to have viewed his family's survival as a kind of marvelous adventure rather than as a terrifying ordeal.

George's father was a thoroughly assimilated Jew named Tivadar Schwartz. For much of his life, he was a somewhat irresponsible playboy and ladies' man, but he rose to the occasion as the Nazi threat drew closer. In 1936 he changed the family name to Soros. After the German takeover of Hungary in 1944, he contrived to get phony papers establishing all family members as Gentiles. George, who was sixteen at the time, was cast as the godson of an official in the agriculture ministry. In 1946, when the Communists took over, his father again correctly read the handwriting on the wall and arranged for George and his older brother to get out of the country before the borders were closed. George made his way abroad on the strength of an invitation to, of all things, an Esperanto conference in Switzerland. (His father was a lifelong student of this artificial language, the invention not of a Hungarian but of a Polish Jew, and even wrote his memoirs in it.)

Soros spent the decade between 1946 and 1956 in England, where he continued to show no signs of money-making talent, but had an epiphany of sorts while studying at the London School of Economics (LSE). There he fastened on the philosopher Karl Popper, one of the university's academic luminaries. Popper is associated with two large, loosely related ideas. One is that scientific knowledge advances only via "falsifiability": no proposition may be accounted scientific unless there is a possibility of testing it empirically and finding it to be false. The other idea, elaborated in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), is that freedom is possible only in those societies that shun dogma and doctrine and assume all public policies to be potentially falsifiable in a manner analogous to scientific propositions.

Soros sparked to these ideas, identified himself as a disciple of Popper, and persuaded his hero to administer a certain amount of what is now called mentoring. He also seems to have showered his mentor with ideas of his own, including a long paper assailing psychoanalysis as unscientific. Long after he had left the LSE and come to America, Soros was still besieging Popper with his own philosophical musings, and also bestowing honors on the philosopher, the source, he said, of his own concern for open societies. What Popper himself made of all this is not exactly clear. There is, however, a pregnant sentence in Kaufman's book: "The fact that [in the 1980's] Popper would admit to having completely forgotten Soros may indicate the deterioration of age, but perhaps he had found Soros's work less than memorable."

IN 1956 Soros got a job offer from a small American financial firm. He was soon at work on Wall Street handling arbitrage (profiting by taking advantage of price discrepancies in different markets) in foreign securities. He was an instant success at the firm and at several others he worked for in the next few years, and soon graduated from arbitrage

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to wide-ranging searches for undervalued securities. Here, too, he made repeated killings even as—in a hilarious detail—he ignominiously flunked the examination that would have formally qualified him as a financial analyst.

During the 1960's, he increasingly gravitated to money management, and in 1969, while working for a firm called Arnhold & S. Bleichroeder, he began running a hedge fund—essentially, an unregulated partnership that invests in just about anything, anywhere, typically with sizable amounts of borrowed money, which radically increases both risks and potential gains. Hedge funds are now all over the place, but then they were a rather esoteric proposition. After a few years at this, Soros left the firm amicably and offered its investors a chance to move their accounts into his own Soros Fund, later renamed the Quantum Fund.

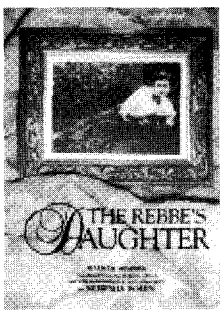
Soros's single most famous exploit as a money man was earning a fast $1 billion in 1992 by aggressively betting that the British pound would fall while the government of Prime Minister John Major was engaged in futile efforts to prop it up. Investors who stayed with Soros from 1969 to the end of 1997 had $353 million for every $100,000 they put up at the beginning. (The figures were somewhat less dazzling after a nettlesome fall-off in 1998-2000.)

The record is doubly astonishing because right in the middle of this long run, when he was approaching fifty, Soros went through an extraordinary personal crisis. He left his wife and three children, broke up with his longtime partner in running the fund, decided that his business life was hollow at the core, and began looking for someone else to run the investment portfolio. Perhaps strangest of all, he went into psychoanalysis, which—"unscientific" or not—he said helped him a lot.

What Kaufman calls this "midlife transformation" ended after several years, with Soros remarried, this time to a talented woman of twenty-eight, and electing to remain in control of Quantum and other investments. But at the same time, he made it clear that he now wished to be a much more public figure—a do-gooder on a worldwide scale. It was in the 1980's that he launched this extraordinary effort.

WHAT IS one to make of Soros's philanthropic accomplishments? Kaufman nowhere squarely addresses this question, but he offers many substantive clues, and more are available in Soros's own writings and on his expansive Internet sites.

My own scorecard rates his earlier efforts far higher than those recently on display. Back in the 1980's, in what turned out to be the last years of European Communism, Soros was a powerful presence in



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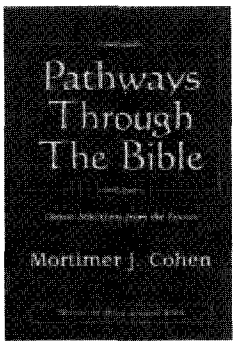

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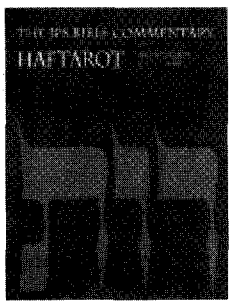

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Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union, in each case imaginatively using his financial muscle to support the opening of closed societies. Much of what he did in Poland involved funneling resources to the Solidarity movement, including funds that ultimately sustained a vast nationwide network of illicit publishing ventures.

In Hungary, Soros was aided by the desire of the Communist-party boss, Janos Kadar, to cast himself as a reformer sympathetic to private initiative. After long negotiations, Soros concluded a deal to set up a quasi-independent entity called the Hungarian Academy of Science/George Soros Foundation. Despite a certain amount of hassling by the security forces, the foundation was soon flooding libraries with otherwise banned works on politics, economics, and sociology. Much more important, as it turned out, was Soros's decision to provide hundreds of state-of-the-art Xerox copiers (with three-year service contracts) for educational and other institutions. Previously unknown in Communist societies, the ability to copy anything, from one's own research papers to censored materials, proved highly subversive, and a huge coup for the foundation, now identified as a serious challenger of party rule.

Soros's single biggest venture was the Soviet-American Foundation Cultural Initiative, launched in 1987 and continued in the post-Soviet era. Soros has spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the USSR and Russia. As of 2000, Kaufman tells us, the program had over a thousand employees and offices in 156 Russian cities and towns. In the Gorbachev era, it invested over $100 million to support Soviet scientists when the government was unable to pay them, and another $100 million or so in efforts to free social-science education from the Marxist-Leninist bureaucracies then still in charge. In the post-Soviet years, the foundation has served up tens of thousands of grants for assorted special projects. The largest, on which scores of millions were spent, included aiding elementary- and secondary-school education in Russia, retraining military officers for lives as private entrepreneurs, and combating an especially virulent strain of tuberculosis that has been devastating the country.

Kaufman mentions at several points that Soros believes philanthropy cannot be successfully bureaucratized—that it works best when the donors are themselves involved in selecting the projects. Foundation managers, he believes, tend to be timid and conventional in the causes to which they gravitate. Eyeballing the causes that Soros funds have supported in recent years, I believe that in some measure they have fallen prey to precisely the pitfall he identified.

But a large footnote needs to accompany this thought: it is not entirely clear that bureaucracy is the sole problem. For Soros himself seems to have changed his politics and priorities during these years. Where once he crusaded for free markets and global capitalism, in recent years he has written that laissez-faire capitalism is itself a threat to open societies, and he has argued, in a long 1997 pronouncement in the *Atlantic*, that a "common interest ought to take precedence over special interests." Not to put too fine a point on it, he has increasingly looked like a rather conventional, politically correct liberal.

Soros-supported programs today call for strict gun control in the U.S. They oppose capital punishment, and also oppose long prison sentences, favoring instead a movement toward "defense-based sentencing" in which convicted criminals do good works in the community. They oppose criminalization of drug sales and instead advocate needle-exchange programs. They look for economic analysis to the Economic Policy Institute, a creature of organized labor.

Soros-backed operations opposed the 1996 welfare-reform bill, deeming it not wholly compatible with open-society principles. They support the rights—and continued presence—of illegal aliens. One relatively small ($30,000) program in 2000 supported "Free Zone, an interactive photodocumentary exhibit by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth." A barrage of grants and programs underwrites women's "empowerment" in the U.S. and abroad. Typical is a program operating in several former Soviet republics that "helps high-school teachers integrate gender sensitivity and multiculturalism into their curricula in a participatory and nonhierarchical fashion."

Soros has made it clear that from here on out, his money-management operations will be much less aggressive. The Quantum Fund is now the Quantum Endowment Fund, and its goal is to reduce his investment risks and settle for modest growth. Unfortunately, there is no sign yet that Soros is reining in his efforts to change the world.

Biophiliac

The Future of Life
by Edward O. Wilson
Knopf. 256 pp. $22.00

Reviewed by
Kevin Shapiro

One of the stranger phenomena in the recent history of science is the brilliant researcher who, at the end of a productive career in one field, moves on to another, embracing sometimes far-fetched projects. The physicist Murray Gell-Mann, for example, has helped to pioneer an abstruse discipline called complexity theory, which aims to

Kevin Shapiro *is a researcher in neuroscience at Harvard.*

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explain everything from weather patterns to the evolution of life. James Watson, the co-discoverer of DNA and for several years the director of the Human Genome Project, has turned to investigating the genetic roots of happiness, and was last heard lecturing an audience at Berkeley on the connection between skin color and sex drive. And of course there is the case of the chemist Linus Pauling, whose last years were devoted to extolling the supposedly miraculous medicinal virtues of Vitamin C. It does these great scientists no disservice to say that these ventures have been speculative at best, bizarre at worst, curious footnotes to otherwise profound legacies.

Some have wondered of late whether we are witnessing a similar phase in the career of Edward O. Wilson, our foremost evolutionary biologist. Wilson achieved fame—and notoriety—in the mid-1970's with the publication of *Sociobiology*, in which he argued that the process of natural selection is the key to understanding the social behavior of both animals and, by extension, human beings. He elaborated on the last part of this proposition in *On Human Nature* (1978), for which he won the Pulitzer Prize. Both books gained him the undying enmity of the academic Left, which (correctly) saw his work as an assault on the view that human behavior is infinitely plastic and unconstrained by biology.

Recently, however, Wilson's work has taken an unexpectedly grandiose turn. In his self-described magnum opus, *Consilience*—published in 1998, shortly after his formal retirement from teaching at Harvard—he offered an outline of how the humanities and the natural and social sciences might one day be unified within a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the laws of physics. Though well-received in some quarters, the book drew scathing criticism from a number of commentators, who dismissed it as an intellectual fantasy.

In his latest book, an environmentalist tract immodestly titled *The Future of Life*, Wilson argues that we must work to preserve as many of the earth's species as possible. Here, of course, he is much closer to his area of expertise, having long been occupied with the study of biodiversity. (He is the author of an influential theory linking the area of an island's ecosystem to the number of species that can survive within it.) But his argument ranges across a panoply of other disciplines as well, from astronomy to psychology. It also corresponds in important respects to the dire and highly questionable pronouncements of the radical environmental Left. A reader could be forgiven for wondering, once again, if Wilson knows what he is talking about.

MUCH OF *The Future of Life* is given over to reciting a litany of disasters—the same ones that the environmental movement has been predicting, in one form or another, for the past three decades. Wilson warns us not only about alarming rates of species extinction and habitat loss, but also about imminent shortages of food and water, the specter of global warming, and sundry other ecological catastrophes destined to come upon us if we persist in destroying the earth's remaining wilderness.

What Wilson adds to this familiar indictment is an explanation—based, characteristically, on evolutionary theory—for our conflicting attitudes toward the environment. On the one hand, he points out, almost everybody is "pro-environment" to some extent. As animals whose ancestors lived in the wild not so long ago, we are inclined by instinct to "biophilia": we are attracted to natural environments, take satisfaction in biological novelty and diversity, and in general feel an affinity for other living things.

Why, then, have we gone so far down the path of ecological destruction? Because, Wilson believes, our biological history has made us deeply parochial creatures. Homo sapiens emerged in the open spaces of the African savanna, our evolutionary home. As our ancestors spread around the world, they sought to re-create this terrain, making ersatz savannas by clearing forests and other alien wildernesses.

In the process, human beings wiped out a large proportion of the indigenous animal and plant species that they encountered, either directly (by hunting and clearcutting) or indirectly (by introducing new species that killed or crowded out indigenous ones). Recorded history has been an unmitigated disaster for the biosphere, and it will continue to be a disaster, Wilson argues, so long as our quest for material comfort and security takes precedence over our sense of kinship with the natural world.

Wilson remains optimistic, however, about the possibility of establishing a balance between humankind and the environment. He strongly believes that conservation can be compatible with progress and prosperity, and makes a number of practical proposals toward this end. The most ambitious would involve the establishment of a vast worldwide nature preserve. The project should begin, he suggests, with the immediate protection of the world's environmental hot spots, which he estimates can be saved with a single investment of roughly $30 billion.

More generally, Wilson hopes that we can nourish our innate biophilia into a lasting ecological ethic, coming to see ourselves as nature's stewards and beneficiaries. A one-time Southern Baptist, he cites God's injunction in Genesis 1:28 to "fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the birds of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." Despite our long history of ravaging the natural world, he concludes, humankind may yet come to understand that all organisms have an "intrinsic right at least to exist."

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Wilson's book is at once an eloquent summary of the earth's biological riches and an impassioned plea for their preservation. Like much of his popular writing, it sparkles with intelligence and idealism.

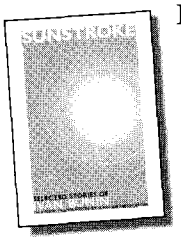
Wilson also deserves credit for rejecting the anti-capitalist biases of the radical environmental Left even while accepting its predictions. He sees the value in technologies like genetic engineering, with its potential both for conserving endangered species and for alleviating human suffering, and shows a basic appreciation of the importance of economic development. Nor does he dismiss those who disagree with him as evil plutocrats and redneck frontiersmen. In his eyes, those whom he amiably calls "cornucopian economists" simply fail to see the necessary tension between capitalism and environmental well-being. Their intentions are good, he believes; it is their reasoning and evidence that are faulty.

Unfortunately, this is far truer of Wilson himself. There is no denying that, wherever human beings have settled, they have brought ecological disruption to a greater or lesser degree. One can even grant that Wilson's speculations about the evolutionary source of this tendency, like his other work in this area, are ingenious and plausible, if not entirely persuasive. But it is another question altogether whether our success at populating the globe will prove to be the downfall of our species and the planet.

Wilson and other environmentalists, taking their cue from Malthus, assume that we will at some point reach the limit of natural resources like water, oil, and arable land, and that in the process we will strip the planet bare, destroying its potential for further growth or even for the basic maintenance of life. But the Malthusian premise is simply wrong. As the Danish statistician Bjørn Lomborg has recently and convincingly demonstrated in *The Skeptical Environmentalist*,* there is no reason to believe that we will ever run out of these essential resources, or that standards of living will decline as the human population increases. Although as a species we have wreaked considerable havoc on the environment, all signs indicate that things are getting better, not worse, and that the state of the biosphere will continue to improve in the foreseeable future.

Wilson is right, of course, that some of the damage is irreparable; barring a spectacular feat of genetic engineering, the world will never again see woolly mammoths, flightless moas, or Malagasy aardvarks. This is a great loss, but it is hardly true that, without drastic and imme-

* My review of this book appeared in the November 2001 Commentary.



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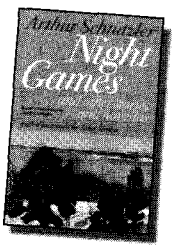

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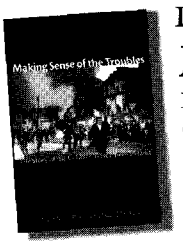

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diate action, the earth is on its way to becoming a monotonous scrubland. Indeed, Lomborg specifically criticizes Wilson himself for alarmism (and arrogance) on the subject of biodiversity, showing that he has used estimates of the rate of species extinction that are inflated, unaccountably, by a factor of about 70.

None of this is to say that *The Future of Life* is without value. On the contrary: if one strips away the admittedly ample environmentalist boilerplate, the book's message can be seen to be deeply conservative, in the strictest and best sense of the word. The environment *is* a treasure, and we are responsible for its safekeeping—not only for nature's sake, but also to preserve and refine the values that make us human.

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Uncivil Wars:
The Controversy over
Reparations for Slavery
by David Horowitz

Encounter. 137 pp. $21.95

Reviewed by
Jacob Heilbrunn

DAVID HOROWITZ was inducted into the culture wars at a tender age. A red-diaper baby of the 1940's, he soaked up his parents' Stalinist beliefs and attended a camp for "workers' children," sitting at the feet of the folksinger Pete Seeger and other prophets of a proletarian paradise. By the 1960's, he had become a well-known radical author and activist in San Francisco, where he co-edited (with Peter Collier) the magazine *Ramparts* and befriended the Black Panther leader Huey Newton.

Within a decade or so, however, Horowitz began to rebel against the rebellion. Horrified by the murderous ways of the Black Panthers at home and the Vietcong abroad, he reversed course, eventually declaring that he sympathized with Ronald Reagan and viewed the Left as a dangerously destructive force. Ever since then, his ideological pugnacity has made him the bête noire of his onetime allies. He now runs *Front Page*, an online magazine that decries political correctness, especially in the universities.

JACOB HEILBRUNN *is a member of the editorial board of the* Los Angeles Times.

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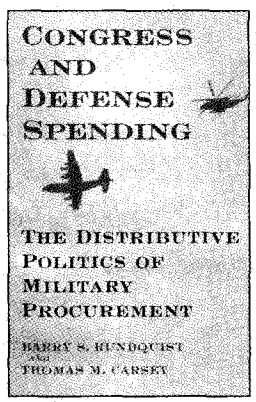
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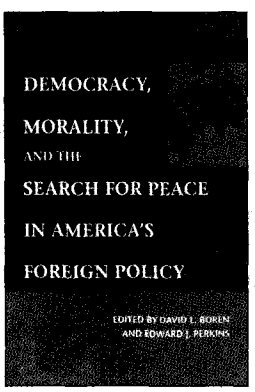

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In *Uncivil Wars*, Horowitz provides a detailed chronicle of his most spectacular assault yet on the campus Left—his recent campaign, waged through college newspapers, against the idea that American blacks deserve reparations for the historical injustices they have suffered. As he shows, his controversial arguments were overtaken by a controversy of a different and, by now, all too familiar kind: whether our institutions of higher learning, ostensibly dedicated to a free and liberal exchange of ideas, would allow him to have his say at all.

As Horowitz tells it, he was prompted to enter this particular fray after discovering to his alarm that the reparations movement, long consigned to the political fringe, had achieved mainstream respectability. In 2000, the former anti-apartheid activist Randall Robinson published a well-received book called *The Debt: What America Owes Blacks*. This resulted, in turn, in the formation of a Reparations Assessment Group, led by the Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree. The group's mission was to file class-action lawsuits against any institution—the federal and state governments, universities, corporations—that may have profited in the past from slavery.

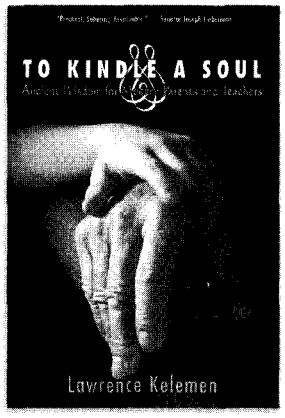
Horowitz responded first with an article against reparations in the online magazine *Salon*, but it attracted little attention. Nine months later, in the spring of 2001, he revised the piece and submitted it to campus newspapers as a paid advertisement in the form of a ten-point manifesto. There he argued, among other things, that "there is no single group responsible for the crime of slavery," that the reparations movement was just "one more attempt to turn African-Americans into victims," and that blacks themselves owed a debt to American whites for the sacrifices made in bringing slavery to an end.

Some college newspapers accepted the advertisement and others rejected it—but everywhere it created a brouhaha. The national press soon chimed in. *Newsweek*'s Jonathan Alter wrote that Horowitz's words reminded him of "one of those tiresome rants supporting a . . . National Association for the Advancement of White People." The columnist John Leo, by contrast, denounced those who rejected the advertisement as the "new censors." Horowitz was delighted with the tumult, and with the self-incriminatingly outrageous behavior of his campus critics.

At Berkeley, as he reports in a chapter on the reaction there, radical students were already inflamed by the university's new admissions policy, which, under Proposition 209, forbade racial preferences. The publication of his advertisement in the *Daily Californian* drew vehement protests, prompting the editors to issue an apology for allowing the paper to become "an inadvertent vehicle for bigotry." Other students—dressed in black, with veils over their mouths—took their objections into the classroom, shouting down professors in order to show that they would not be "ignored." As for the Berkeley administration, its response to this blatant attempt at intimidation was, Horowitz writes, "in keeping with its normal policy of appeasing left-wing mischief." University officials "stayed out of the picture and let the classroom obstructions proceed without reprisal."

Other campuses on which Horowitz shines his spotlight offered variations on these same themes. At the University of Wisconsin in Madison, the editors of the *Daily Cardinal* refused Horowitz's ad, but their counterparts at the *Badger Herald*, a conservative student paper, agreed to run it. Their reward for this decision: a public rebuke signed by 72 members of the university's faculty and administration. At Brown, the editors of the *Daily Herald* were assailed from a different direction. A self-styled Coalition of Concerned Brown Students, made up of the campus's "third-world" activists, demanded that the paper donate the money received for Horowitz's advertisement to the campus's . . . third-world activists.

Always a canny promoter, Horo-



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witz went on a tour of campuses to confront his critics, who (in his account) did not prove to be very formidable. At MIT, he debated Dorothy Benton-Lewis, head of the National Coalition for Reparations, who gave the following rationale for her activism:

> Any time you have to depend on the country that enslaved you to feed, clothe, and shelter you, you are still a slave. There were 4 million slaves at the end of emancipation. We are still enslaved; we are just modern-day slaves.

Looking into the audience of well-dressed MIT students, Horowitz replied, "I don't see any slaves here."

THERE IS much to praise in *Uncivil Wars*. Horowitz is certainly on solid ground in condemning the reparations movement for its inflammatory rhetoric, shoddy history, and intolerance. As he forcefully argues, the movement represents just one of the many half-baked ideas to which the universities have lent a patina of legitimacy since the 1960's. It is part of the broader academic effort to reinterpret "the narrative of American freedom as a chronicle of race and class oppression." The particular irony in this case, Horowitz notes, is that today's American blacks, far from being the hapless victims of racism, are eagerly sought after by governments, corporations, and universities—the very institutions the activists want to punish.

Still, for all the power of his arguments, Horowitz is often his own worst enemy. For one thing, *Uncivil Wars* has the feel of a cut-and-paste job. Page after page is filled with excerpts from Horowitz's own speeches and from coverage of the controversy in university newspapers. Though these long passages help to evoke something of the flavor of combat on campus, after a point they simply grow tedious.

There is also the problem of tone. At times, Horowitz verges on the sanctimonious. Reprinting a lengthy article from the University of Wisconsin's *Badger Herald*—which accepted and defended his advertisement—he declares that his "hat is off" to the paper's young editors. "Our nation's press," he pronounces, "will be stronger and more principled if they should choose journalism as their life's work." At other times he is guilty of overstatement. Even if one rejects the idea of reparations, it is a bit much to tell American blacks that they should be grateful to the U.S. for, of all things, having liberated them from slavery. As a veteran agitator, Horowitz surely knew that this claim would provoke—and also that, without it, his campaign would never have attracted so much national attention.

Even so, it is only in the context of today's academy, where a culture of ingrained dishonesty prevails, that most of the points in David Horowitz's manifesto could seem outrageous. In the end, the most striking thing about his arguments is not their originality but their obviousness, at least for those willing to engage in honest debate on a delicate subject.

Secret Agent

See No Evil:
The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism
by Robert Baer
Crown. 284 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Kenneth R. Timmerman

ROBERT BAER, a CIA officer for 22 years, resigned from the agency in disgust in late 1997. He has now written an important mem-

KENNETH R. TIMMERMAN *is a senior writer with* Insight *magazine and a contributor to the* Reader's Digest. *He has published four books on intelligence matters, terrorism, and the arms trade.*

oir detailing how the CIA lost the war against terror well before the murderous plans of the September 11 bombers were even conceived. The key to failure, Baer contends, was the agency's systematic unwillingness and inability to engage in the difficult and frequently dangerous work of recruiting foreign sources. With its upper ranks increasingly reliant on satellite and other forms of electronic surveillance and afraid of taking risks in the field, officers posted abroad were not assigned to gather human intelligence aggressively. "In practical terms," writes Baer, "the CIA had taken itself out of the business of spying."

This harsh judgment from a self-described CIA "foot soldier" comes at a critical moment, for in the war against terror, the agency has now been given dramatic new missions—and bundles of new money. Unless major changes are made in the way it does business, the CIA will not be up to the task at hand.

BAER IS no novice operative, still wet under the collar, who quit after finding CIA field culture incompatible with his style of life. He was a seasoned case officer, i.e., a recruiter of foreign agents, informers, and the like, whose two decades of overseas assignments began in India during the tough cold-war days of the 1970's and included postings to Syria, Sudan, Beirut, Paris, Tajikistan, and northern Iraq; in the last-named of these, he became the U.S. coordinator of Iraqi opposition fighters seeking to overthrow Saddam Hussein. For much of his career, Baer was assigned to the CIA's counterterrorism center, where he acquired a wealth of firsthand experience with the problem we now all face.

Along the way, Baer also acquired a wealth of firsthand experience with the CIA's often dysfunctional culture. Posted to Syria in 1983, he recruited a source within a Palestinian terrorist group who disclosed the whereabouts of a new office of

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the highly secretive Abu Nidal organization, a splinter group of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that was responsible for terrorist acts in almost two dozen countries around the world. But when Baer proposed bugging the office, his superior looked at him "wide-eyed," objecting that Washington would never approve. Baer's time in Damascus, he suggested, would be better spent making contacts at a cocktail party at the Australian embassy. Baer pressed the matter, but the station chief proceeded to polish his wing tips: "When the buffing rag came out, I knew the conversation was over."

Though Baer ranges widely, *See No Evil* could be subtitled "Unfinished Business," the business in question being his relentless investigation of the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut in 1983. This terrorist act, he shows convincingly, continues to have direct repercussions on our situation today, and to it he devotes a great deal of attention here.

The destruction of the embassy occurred just as Beirut was poised for recovery from a seven-year orgy of bloodletting. Yasir Arafat's PLO, a chief player in the internecine conflict, had been forced by Israel to withdraw from Lebanon six months earlier; U.S., French, British, and Italian peacekeeping troops had arrived, and were welcomed as liberators. For the first time since the civil war began in 1975, the warring Christian and Muslim sides were reunited, and it was possible once again to walk across the "Green Line" separating the city without fear of being shot.

The April 18, 1983 explosion at the American embassy, the work of a suicide bomber who took 61 people with him, shattered the fragile peace. A dark chain of events was set in motion that led to more bombings, the murder of the CIA station chief William F. Buckley some time after he was taken hostage in 1984, the murder of U.S. Marine Corps Colonel Richard Higgins in 1988, and the kidnapping of some three dozen Western civilians.

Baer, posted to Beirut in 1986, became deeply immersed in the study of the terrorist violence flaring up around him. Although a number of basic questions about the embassy blast three years earlier still lay unresolved, one thing was clear from the evidence: the hand behind that bombing had also organized the taking of foreign hostages in Lebanon and the murder of Buckley. The bombing thus held the key to all the subsequent attacks.

The CIA *had* been able to identify the proximate planner of the bombing: a Lebanese Muslim by the name of Imad Mughniyah. But this figure was a puzzle in himself, a twenty-year-old who had seemingly burst out of nowhere to become a terrorist mastermind. Although Baer was able to discover that Mughniyah had been brought up in a poor neighborhood in Beirut's southern suburbs, after that the trail went cold. Nor had any of Baer's predecessors in Beirut pursued him further.

Baer proceeded to try to piece together a fuller portrait. It emerged that, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, Mughniyah had joined Arafat's elite Force 17 security unit, where he had appeared to be little more than "a low-level bang man, one of dozens who spent their days and nights sniping at Christians across the Green Line." How did someone with such an unprepossessing background come to build an organization capable of carrying out well-funded and highly sophisticated terrorist operations? It seems he had help.

One of Baer's agents disclosed that, in plotting the embassy bomb-

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ing, Mughniyah had relied upon a Persian Gulf-based cell of sleeper agents belonging to Arafat's armed Fatah organization. The Fatah men had served as go-betweens to Hizbullah, the terrorist group active in Lebanon under the control of the mullahs in Tehran. Digging deeper, Baer uncovered a web of ties between the PLO and the Islamic Republic of Iran, including a secret 1972 agreement between Arafat and Ayatollah Khomeini that provided for the training of Iranian fighters at Fatah terrorist camps in Lebanon. Among the future leaders of Iran who went through Fatah training were Mustafa Chamran, the first commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and Ahmad Khomeini, Ayatollah Khomeini's son.

Another key piece of the puzzle fell into place for Baer as he analyzed the attempted assassination of former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar in Paris in 1980. The would-be assassin, Anis Naccache, was a leftist and a recent Christian convert to the Sunni brand of Islam. "At first his participation in the crime made no sense at all," writes Baer. "Why would a Lebanese Sunni attempt to kill an ex-Iranian prime minister?" But Arafat was known to have an efficient network in Paris, and the evidence suggested that he had activated it on behalf of the Iranians.

In short, writes Baer, "Arafat had put his entire worldwide terrorist network at Iran's disposal." Having been forced out of Beirut in 1982 by the Israelis, he had "handed it over lock, stock, and barrel to the Iranians for safekeeping." The complicity of each of them in the embassy bombing, and of both of them together, could not have been clearer.

THE TIES forged in the early 80's have remained strong in the years since then, Baer shows. Either separately or together, the PLO and Iran have been deeply implicated in many terrorist actions for which neither has ever been called to account. In particular, they circulated between them the funds used by the terrorists who, in December 1988, planted the bomb aboard Pan Am 103, which crashed over Lockerbie, Scotland—an act for which, up to now, the United States has blamed Libya alone. According to Baer, Iran also established training camps for the Hizbullah terrorists who blew up Saudi national-guard barracks in Riyadh in 1995 and the U.S. Marine Khobar Tower barracks in Dhahran in 1996, attacks that have been generally ascribed to Osama bin Laden.

"As I looked at the evidence in front of me," Baer concludes, "the Islamic Republic of Iran had declared a secret war against the United States, and the United States had chosen to ignore it." Yet Baer had no success in interesting his superiors in what he had uncovered, and I can well understand why. As a Paris- and Beirut-based reporter trying to interest editors in similar facts at roughly the same time, I had no more success than he. I still have pictures, given to me from this period by an Iranian photographer, of Ahmad Khomeini dressed in his clerical robes and shouldering an RPG-7 rocket at a Palestinian camp in Lebanon. But deep connections between the secular Marxist PLO of Yasir Arafat and the theocratic fundamentalist Iran of Ayatollah Khomeini were considered simply too bizarre to be credible.

The whole world now has reason to know just how wrong was this piece of establishment wisdom. Only two weeks after *See No Evil* arrived in the bookstores, Israel intercepted the *Karine-A*, a vessel laden with weapons of terror that had been dispatched from Iran and was destined for Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority. But will events like this force a reappraisal of the joint Iranian and PLO role in sponsoring terror across the board? And will such a reappraisal take place in agencies like the CIA that have long resisted it? Given the tepid or hos-

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tile response of much of the foreign-policy elite to President Bush's characterization of Iran as part of an "axis of evil," one cannot be too hopeful.

As for Yasir Arafat and Imad Mughniyah, the former, despite having American blood on his hands, went on to win a Nobel Peace Prize and still traffics regularly in terrorism. The latter is believed to be alive and well and plotting in Lebanon. Not long after September 11, he was placed on the FBI's "Most Wanted Terrorists" list.

Klezmer at the Cabaret

Virtually Jewish:
Reinventing Jewish Culture
in Europe
By Ruth Ellen Gruber
University of California. 330 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

Not long ago, I came across an item in the newspapers about a major new institute for Jewish studies being created in Stockholm by the Swedish government. The news struck me as odd. Why on earth was Sweden, a country with a tiny Jewish population, investing in such a project, and for whom?

But I was insufficiently au courant. And being behind the times, I was not aware, as I now am after reading *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* by the Europe-based journalist Ruth Ellen Gruber, that the Swedish government was thoroughly abreast of them. From London to Bratislava, from Scandinavia to Sicily, Jewishness, it seems, is now "in." Europe has rediscovered the Jews and is thrilled by it.

To those troubled by the recrudescence of fashionable anti-Semitism in Europe, and the increase there of antagonism toward Israel, this may come as a surprise. And yet, as Gruber's book establishes, two generations after the Holocaust, in an age in which the Jewish population of Europe is in all likelihood proportionally smaller than at any time since the days of the Roman republic, there is a surge of positive interest in things Jewish. How such a trend might be related, if at all, to its opposite is an intriguing question.

Most of *Virtually Jewish* is devoted to documenting the trend itself, which has been accelerating, Gruber writes, since the 1980's. A many-sided phenomenon, it ranges from serious intellectual activity to commercial kitsch and is driven by emotions as different as a genuine sense of loss over the destruction of European Jewry and a sentimental nostalgia for an old-fashioned Europe. Among the forms it has taken are the widespread construction of Holocaust and Judaica museums; the renovation of old synagogues, ritual bathhouses, and other Jewish structures; the restoration and preservation of long-neglected Jewish cemeteries; publicly and privately sponsored seminars and lectures on Judaism; courses in Yiddish; Jewish music festivals; the sale of Jewish artifacts and memorabilia; Jewish heritage tours; Jewish bookstores, theater, and art exhibits; and Jewish cabarets and restaurants.

Often these are found in conjunction; often, too, their initiators, executors, and proprietors are Gentiles. Here is Gruber's account of Kazimierz, the remnants of the old Jewish quarter of Kraków, Poland:

> Three thousand people, most of them young non-Jews, clap and dance past midnight each summer at the gala open-air concert

Hillel Halkin *is the author of* Across the Sabbath River: In Search of a Lost Tribe of Israel, *to be published in August by Houghton Mifflin. His article, "The Return of Anti-Semitism," appeared in our February issue.*

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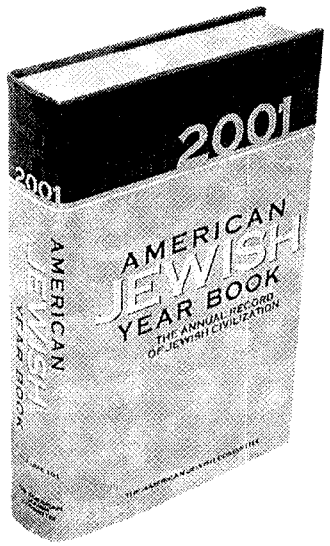

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of klezmer and other Jewish music in the main square. . . . At one end of the square stands the Gothic-Renaissance Old Synagogue, now a Jewish museum. . . . A former ritual bath has been turned into an upscale "Jewish restaurant," which, along with several other such establishments, including a combined Jewish bookshop-café, has become a popular hangout for local Krakovians and tourists. In 1997 a former priest presided over a souvenir stall that sold postcards and carved "Jewish" dolls, yarmulkes, and colorful T-shirts. I even bought a T-shirt there that showed a barbed-wire crown of thorns surrounding a railroad track and what looks like a shower head, plus the infamous Nazi slogan *Arbeit Macht Frei* and, in Polish, the words "Never Again/Auschwitz."

This, in a country that had three million Jews before the Holocaust and now has five to ten thousand, is "virtual Jewishness" at its cheapest and most distasteful. Yet elsewhere in Poland and in Europe, many non-Jews, as described by Gruber, are trying to learn about the Jewish life that once existed in their midst, and to salvage physical remnants of it, in ways that are more thoughtful, if not necessarily less troubling.

Gruber goes from place to place, seeking out these people and trying to understand what motivates them. In the Bavarian city of Fuerth, she talks to Gisella Blume, the daughter of a World War II German soldier who has volunteered to maintain the local Jewish cemetery. "Frau Blume," writes Gruber, "acted as if she personally knew the people whose graves she was tending. . . . She identified with them and the Jewish world they lived in; she championed and protected them: they were 'hers.'" In Bialystok, the author meets the Polish journalist Tomasz Wisniewski; a self-appointed archivist of all the material he can collect about the Bialystok Jewish community, he tells Gruber that "an honest history of Poland does not exist without the history of the Jews," and the new interest in their history "makes me happy because it is as if the Polish Jews had returned in a metaphorical sense to Poland." In Berlin, Gruber hears from Cecille Kossmann of the Klezmer Gesellschaft about how playing for seven hours at the former Nazi concentration camp of Sachsenhausen was "a very joyful and deep experience. It was very moving to be there with my feet on the place where thousands died and to play their music—their music survived." In Italy, Moni Ovadia, a Bulgarian Jew and non-native speaker of Yiddish who is now a star cabaret performer in that language, says to Gruber: "It doesn't matter that the audience doesn't understand the words. What's important is that they hear the sound and cadences of Yiddish, the language spoken by the overwhelming majority of Holocaust victims."

THERE ARE many questions to be asked about these things, and Gruber asks nearly all of them. Where does the line run between crass commercial exploitation of the Jewish past and genuine curiosity or caring about it? *Is* this caring, at bottom, mostly an attempt to assuage feelings of guilt for the Holocaust? Is it a rebellion against the perceived shallowness of contemporary Europe on the part of Gentiles who associate Jews with cosmopolitan profundity and trenchant irony? Or is it perhaps the expression of a romantic longing for the world of one's childhood, parents, or grandparents? In the absence of a vibrant Jewish life around them, and often of any Jews at all, are non-Jews fooling themselves in their belief that they can enter into a meaningful relationship with Jewish culture? Do they have a right to such a relationship if it is unmediated and unguided by Jews? Should Jews be pleased by such interest? Or

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Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)," in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians" and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories." In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millenium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

> "The Arab propaganda machine has created myths that have been accepted by much of the world. No peace in the Middle East is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are!"

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem," let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem."

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem."

"Settlements." When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews) – the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements," with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

The term "settlements," too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

"Refugees." In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees – by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps," so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unremitting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians," the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million(!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war.

The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

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should they resent it as one more form of Christian insensitivity, a superficial appropriation of the ruins of a world that Christians annihilated? Should Jews react as did the biblical prophet Elijah when he accused King Ahab with the words, "Hast thou killed and also taken possession?"

No doubt because she knows there are no simple answers to these questions, Gruber does not spend much time searching for them. Ultimately, of course, every possible answer fits someone. There are those making money from "virtual Jewishness," and those working out their guilt through it, and those for whom it is a means of protest, and those who feel responsible for preserving the remains of what the generation of their parents tried to destroy totally, and those who honestly wish to know more about Jews and Judaism, and those who are truly drawn to this or that aspect of Jewish experience without always understanding why.

Jews will relate to each of these types in different ways. But, although they may wish to engage some in dialogue while avoiding others, they will have to accept the fact that, like everyone else, they have no monopoly over the culture of their ancestors. The German klezmer musician who tells Gruber, "I'm not a Jew, and I don't want to look Jewish, or to sound Jewish, but as a musician I have very, very deep feelings for this music," is not only saying something perfectly legitimate, he is saying what a white American trumpet player might say about blacks and jazz, or a Chinese cellist about Europeans and Bach.

Time will tell, I suppose, what in all this is mere faddishness and what reflects something deeper. Despite Gruber's impressive catalog of cases, "virtual Jewishness" is still a fringe phenomenon rather than a mania sweeping Europe. Most Europeans probably have no more idea that it exists than I did before reading this book. If some Germans love klezmer music, others go for country or bluegrass, and there are fewer Jewish restaurants in Warsaw than there are Polish-run pizzerias. We live in eclectic and syncretistic times. That Jewish culture, too, is being borrowed from—exploited, if you take the dimmer view—does not necessarily make it an object of unique attention.

More worrisome is something that Gruber alludes to in several places without addressing its full implications. Although the "virtual Jewishness" she writes about has no overt political content, it has a potential political use. This is the propagation of the message that the Jewish experience can be broken down into discrete cultural and religious elements that are abstractable from Jewish peoplehood, so that by appreciating or identifying with any or all of these elements—Jewish music, Jewish literature, Jewish thought, Jewish food—one can be "for" Jews and Judaism while opposing the claims of that peoplehood. One can, that is, be pro-Jewish and anti-Israel at the same time.

Is such a bifurcation taking place? Gruber's book offers no evidence of it. Although Israel does not seem terribly important to her interlocutors, neither does she report them speaking negatively of it. But the Swedish government has been, for many years now, the most anti-Israel government in Europe. Its decision to sponsor an institute for Jewish studies is a reason to be on one's guard. One need not fear virtual Jews. Virtual Jew-lovers, though, are something else.

We mourn the death of

Richard Grenier

whose essays and reviews appeared in COMMENTARY from 1979 to 1994 and who served as our regular movie critic from 1980 to 1985.

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How to Undermine the High School Diploma

Diane Ravitch is a research professor, New York University; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

For many years, educators and policymakers at state and national levels have been trying to persuade young people to finish high school. Dropping out without a diploma, it is widely recognized, is associated with lower wages and scant economic prospects over one's lifetime. Consequently, we have regularly seen advertising campaigns by public officials and private industry encouraging teenagers to stay in school and improve their life chances.

Yet **the U.S. Department of Transportation recently indicated that a high school diploma is not especially important.** Last fall, when Congress passed legislation to improve airport security, it federalized the nation's 28,000 screeners of passengers and baggage. The legislation directed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to hire, train, test, and deploy those responsible for screening access to our nation's airplanes. The public assumed that the purpose of this legislation was to heighten security.

At first, the FAA said that it would require a high school diploma for those jobs. But when it was discovered that some 7,000 current airport screeners do not have a high school diploma, the FAA reversed course and decided that it would accept a year of relevant work experience in lieu of a high school degree. In other words, the current workforce, which allowed massive security lapses on September 11, is good enough. Even though its starting salaries will be doubled (to an average of $30,000), the workforce will remain unchanged and its qualifications will not be increased.

There are two problems here: (1) the legislation is a sham if it does not raise minimal standards for those who hold these sensitive jobs; (2) the FAA's decision sends a message to students that it is not necessary to have a high school diploma to get a good job, even one that is crucial to the nation's security.

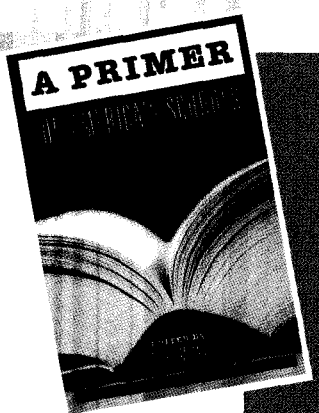
Why should screeners have a high school diploma? Teachers and principals will tell you that school completion indicates a certain level of persistence, self-discipline, literacy, and accomplishment. Young people who lack the motivation to complete their high school studies are not the best pool from which to select those who are expected to read passengers' faces and behavior, to assess the contents of their bags, and to do so quickly and accurately.

How can teachers persuade their students to stay in school and get their diploma if the FAA says that the degree doesn't matter? To his credit, Senator Charles Schumer of New York has complained about this unfortunate decision.

Members of the American public were led to believe that the federalization of the workforce would raise standards for those entrusted with their safety The FAA's willingness to suspend educational standards for one-quarter of airport screeners sends a negative message not only to airline passengers but also to the nation's students and their teachers.

— Diane Ravitch

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University



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A world of ideas on public policy.

Pharmaceutical Profits and the Discovery of New Medicines

by F. M. Scherer

Since the late 1950s, when the Kefauver Committee investigated the business practices of U.S. pharmaceutical companies, representatives of that sector have argued that its profits are an important stimulus to, and source of funding for, research and development – which in turn leads to a stream of health-enhancing new products. Although the argument is plausible on its face, quantitative evidence on the robustness of the linkage has been scarce. This article reports the results of a recent data analysis that yields surprising new insights on the connection between pharmaceutical profits and innovation.

Profitability and investments in R&D can, in principle, be linked in three rather different ways. First, successful R&D leads, with long and variable lags, to new products, which, depending upon their reception in the market, can add greatly to company profits. Second, the profits earned by a company serve as a source of funds to support R&D investment, and some managers are known to set R&D budgets using rules of thumb emphasizing an indicator of current cash flow or sales. Third, managers' expectations of future profit opportunities can exert a demand-pull influence on R&D investment.

In a recent study, I analyzed R&D outlays and profits at the aggregated industry level, using U.S. Census Bureau data on pharmaceutical manufacturing plants' gross margins – i.e., the surplus of revenues over in-plant production costs available to cover R&D costs along with depreciation, marketing costs, central office costs, debt service costs, income taxes, and net profits.

The growth rate of the pharmaceutical sector's deflated gross margins was 4.23 percent per year – much lower than the 7.51 percent growth rate found for R&D outlays. The disparity of growth rates implies a likely slackening of R&D growth rates in the future. If R&D were covered solely by domestic gross margins, continuation of growth trends experienced since 1962 would mean that R&D outlays would exceed gross margins in 2025. To be sure, profits from overseas sales also help to repay R&D costs, but since the United States is the largest single market for U.S. drug companies' products, retardation of R&D growth rates seems likely in the long run.

> ***The degree of coincidence between gross profits and R&D investment over the past forty years is surprisingly close***

Both R&D investment and the pharmaceutical sector's gross margins exhibit long swings around their exponential time trend. But the degree of coincidence between gross profits and R&D investment over the past forty years is surprisingly close. The association becomes clear when one computes the percentage deviations of actual R&D outlays and gross margins from their trends and juxtaposes the resulting series. This comparison shows that deviations from trend values rise and fall in tandem, confirming the persistence of a robust pattern between R&D investment and gross industry profitability. The swings are so closely correlated that it would be implausible to infer a chain of causation running from R&D to profits, since lags of ten to fifteen years from peak R&D spending to peak profitability for new products are typical.

Sensitivity tests revealed that these patterns persist when domestic R&D outlays, a time series available beginning only in 1970, are substituted for worldwide R&D outlays, and when fringe benefit outlays, reported by the Census Bureau beginning only in 1967, are not deducted in calculating gross margins.

Combined with evidence that profit rates of return on R&D investments tend to exceed risk-adjusted capital costs by only modest amounts, the pattern suggests that pharmaceutical R&D is best described by a virtuous rent-seeking model. That is, as profit opportunities expand, firms compete to exploit them by increasing investments, primarily in R&D, until the increases in costs dissipate most, if not all, supranormal profit returns.

If this is a correct interpretation of drug companies' behavior, it has obvious implications for policy interventions aimed at reducing the pharmaceutical sector's prices and profits. If governments attempt to limit public healthcare spending by imposing price controls on the pharmaceutical sector and suppressing its profitability, they risk undermining the ability of drug companies to fund the lengthy and difficult process of discovering and developing new medicines.

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